

DC 301 Advanced Screenwriting I  
Winter 2016  
Thursday 1:30PM - 4:45PM  
Course Syllabus  
14 e. Jackson 209

Instructor: Andrew Stasiulis  
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Office: CDM 408  
Office Hours: Mondays 12pm - 2pm. Wednesdays 12pm - 2pm. Thursdays 10am - 12pm.

### Summary of the Course

This course focuses on creating a well-vetted original concept, step outline, and first act for a feature length screenplay. Students will analyze the conventions of plot, structure, theme, and character-driven narratives in an effort to develop their unique voice on the page. Conjunctively, students will participate in workshops to foster their professional communication skills. Following this course, students will revise and complete their screenplay in DC 302.

### Learning Outcomes

- Students will enhance their knowledge of screenwriting conventions and script analysis through assigned readings and in-class workshops.
- \* Students will identify the link between form and content in narrative structure.
- Students will learn techniques to enhance audience identification for their story.
- Students will complete two drafts of the first act of a feature length screenplay.

### Textbooks and Printed Resources

Storytelling in the New Hollywood: Understanding Classical Narrative Technique  
Kristin Thompson  
Harvard University Press

Additional assigned readings provided by the instructor

### Grading

Class attendance and participation 20%  
Group Discussion Forum Feedback 10%  
Premise & Plot Point Assignments 10%  
Feature Length Step Outline 10%  
Draft of First Act 20%  
Final Draft of First Act 30%

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.

### Week by Week Outline

Week 1: January 7<sup>th</sup>  
Introduction of Course. Ideas, Premise, and Theme.  
Reading: Screenplay TBD

Week 2: January 14<sup>th</sup>  
Structure. What is a narrative?  
Reading: Storytelling in the New Hollywood

Week 3: January 21<sup>st</sup>  
Premise Pitches.  
Reading: Storytelling in the New Hollywood

Week 4: January 28<sup>th</sup>  
Premise Pitches.  
Assignment: Plot Points

Week 5: February 4<sup>th</sup>  
Tone and Voice. Part 1 of Screenplay.  
Assignment: Outline

Week 6: February 11<sup>th</sup>  
Dialogue and Exposition.

Week 7: February 18<sup>th</sup>  
Scenes and Sequences.  
Assignment: Pages 1-10

Week 8: February 25<sup>th</sup>  
Genre Writing.  
Assignment: Pages 10-20

Week 9: March 4<sup>th</sup>  
Workshop.  
Assignment: Pages 20-30

Week 10: March 11<sup>th</sup>  
Workshop.

Assignment: Rewrite Part I.

Week 11: March 18<sup>th</sup>  
FINAL DRAFT DUE.

#### Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

#### D2L

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to: <https://login.depaul.edu/cas/login?service=https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/orgtools/CAS/Default.aspx> and enter using your campus connect logon and password. Once you are logged on, click on the course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, course outline, video lectures, discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

#### D2L Group Feedback

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, you have been placed in a group with three/four other students. You will submit outline assignments and pages to your group for evaluation via the discussion forum on D2L. In addition, you will read the pages submitted by your group members and provide a minimum of three notes per script. Each group member will create a discussion thread for the week's submission (Example: John Smith's First Act). Group members will provide notes in the body of this thread.

#### In-Class Workshops

Every student will have the first ten pages of their screenplay workshopped in class. I will create a discussion thread on D2L for the scripts that were workshopped, which will allow students to continue discussion that time did not allow for in class. The in-class workshops will begin Week 8 and run to the end of the quarter.

#### 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.

#### 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 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.

### 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).

### 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

TTY: (773)325-7296

Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

Class Discussion: Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer

comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

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.

Cell Phones/On Call: If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undistruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.