

DePaul University
School of Cinematic Arts

DC 302-801: Advanced Screenwriting II

Winter 2017

Thursday 5:45 – 9:00PM, Daley 211 and Online

Professor Scott Myers: smyers15@cdm.depaul.edu
312-362-1120

Office Hours: (CDM 403) WED 5:00-6:00PM, THU 3:00-4:00PM

Description

This course focuses on the writing of the second and third acts of a feature length screenplay. Students finish and begin revising the first draft of the script started in DC 301. Emphasis is placed on proper character development, effective use of conflict, and adherence to the three act structure.

Objectives

- Set realistic goals and meet submission deadlines
- Apply the sequence approach to write a feature length screenplay
- Engage in constructive critiques while workshoping each other's script pages
- Learn specific aspects of the screenwriting craft via workshop examples
- Become familiar with contemporary screenplay style
- Practice visual storytelling and imagematic writing

Prerequisites

DC 301 or 304

Outcomes

- Students will write a 90+ page feature length original screenplay
- Students will develop critical analytical skills through group workshops

Course Management

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**, where both the online and in-class sections are linked together. There students will find course news, assignments and additional reading materials.

Each week's recorded sessions (available shortly after 9PM each Thursday) will be available here: <https://col.cdm.depaul.edu>.

Should you have problems accessing lectures, request assistance:

<http://colsupport.cdm.depaul.edu/ErrorReport.aspx>

The class will be divided into three groups (A, B, C). Every third week, each group's members will be responsible for presenting **2 sequences** (approximately 20-30 pages) for in-class workshopping.

Each student in that week's group will select other students as 'actors' for a table reading of the writer's pages.

Students are responsible for uploading writing assignments to their D2L Dropbox. This must be done by class time when they are scheduled to read. **Format: PDF.**

Instructor feedback will consist of written and oral comments in class. In the event we do not get to a student's pages in class or they miss a class with an excused absence, we will set a time for the student to come to the instructor's office for a one-on-one session: The student will read their pages aloud and the instructor will provide feedback at that time.

All written assignments must be typed with pages numbered and proper format. Writing assignments are due at the start of each class session.

Screenwriting software: Fade In, Final Draft, or Movie Magic Screenwriter. Free alternatives: Celtx (<http://celtx.com/>), Writers Duet.

Print out a copy of your script pages for each weekly assignment to give to the instructor at the beginning of the class session when we will read your pages

Course Outline

Week 1 – January 5

Course intro and brief in-class discussion of each student's story

Review Narrative Throughline

Overview Lecture 1: The Opening

Overview Lecture 2: The Hook Sequence

Overview Lecture 3: The Lock Sequence

Reading Assignment (D2L)

Lecture 4: Deconstruction Test Sequence

Lecture 5: Transition Sequence

Lectures 1-3 will also be available on D2L for your reference

Writing Assignment

Group A: Write Sequences 3-4 (due 1/12)

Group B: Write Sequences 3-4 (due 1/19)

Group C: Write Sequences 3-4 (due 1/26)

Week 2 – January 12

In-class table read and workshop: **Group A's Sequences 3-4**

Writing Assignment

Group B: Write Sequences 3-4 (due 1/19)

Group C: Write Sequences 3-4 (due 1/26)

Group A: Write Sequences 5-6 (due 2/2)

Reading Assignment (D2L)

Lecture 6: Reconstruction Test Sequence

PP. 1-30, *Arrival* script

Week 3 – January 19

In-class table read and workshop: **Group B's Sequences 3-4**

Writing Assignment

Group C: Write Sequences 3-4 (due 1/26)

Group A: Write Sequences 5-6 (due 2/2)

Group B: Write Sequences 5-6 (due 2/9)

Reading Assignment (D2L)

Lecture 7: All Is Lost

PP. 1-28, *Zootopia* script

Week 4 – January 26

In-class table read and workshop: **Group C's Sequences 3-4**

Writing Assignment

Group A: Write Sequences 5-6 (due 2/2)

Group B: Write Sequences 5-6 (due 2/9)

Group C: Write Sequences 5-6 (due 2/16)

Reading Assignment (D2L)

Lecture 8: On The Offensive

PP. 1-27, *Ex Machina* script

Week 5 – February 2

In-class table read and workshop: **Group A's Sequences 5-6**

Writing Assignment

Group B: Write Sequences 5-6 (due 2/9)

Group C: Write Sequences 5-6 (due 2/16)

Group A: Write Sequences 7-8 (due 2/23)

Reading Assignment (D2L)

Lecture 9: Final Struggle
PP. 1-38, *Whiplash* script

Week 6 – February 9

In-class table read and workshop: **Group B's Sequences 5-6**

Writing Assignment

Group C: Write Sequences 5-6 (due 2/16)
Group A: Write Sequences 7-8 (due 2/23)
Group B: Write Sequences 7-8 (due 3/2)

Reading Assignment (D2L)

Lecture 10: Denouement
PP. 1-26, *Looper* script

Week 7 – February 16

In-class table read and workshop: **Group C's Sequences 5-6**

Writing Assignment

Group A: Write Sequences 7-8 (due 2/23)
Group B: Write Sequences 7-8 (due 3/2)
Group C: Write Sequences 7-8 (due 3/9)

Reading Assignment (D2L)

PP. 1-31, *All Is Lost* script

Week 8 – February 23

In-class table read and workshop: **Group A's Sequences 7-8**

Writing Assignment

Group B: Write Sequences 7-8 (due 3/2)
Group C: Write Sequences 7-8 (due 3/9)
Group A: Revise Entire Script (due 3/16)

Reading Assignment (D2L)

PP. 1-29, *The Social Network* script

Week 9 – March 2

In-class table read and workshop: **Group B's Sequences 7-8**

Writing Assignment

Group C: Write Sequences 7-8 (due 3/9)
Group A: Revise Entire Script (due 3/16)
Group B: Revise Entire Script (due 3/16)

Reading Assignment (D2L)

PP. 1-28, *How to Train Your Dragon* script

We will set aside 20 minutes for course evaluations in class this week. You may complete the evaluation on a laptop or mobile device (details later).

Week 10 – March 9

In-class table read and workshop: **Group C's Sequences 7-8**

Writing Assignment

Group A: Revise Entire Script (due 3/16)

Group B: Revise Entire Script (due 3/16)

Group C: Revise Entire Script (due 3/16)

Revised final script due in your D2L Dropbox by **9PM, March 16.**

15%: Class participation and workshop feedback

15%: Sequences 3-4

15%: Sequences 5-6

15%: Sequences 7-8

40%: Final Revised Script

Late work will not be accepted without a legitimate excuse communicated to the instructor in a timely fashion.

These values are minimums for each grade:

A	= 95	C+	= 78
A-	= 92	C	= 75
B+	= 88	C-	= 70
B	= 85	D+	= 69
B-	= 80	D	= 65

Participation

This class is a workshop. That means you are expected to focus on each writer's script pages, assess what works and what – in your opinion – needs work, express your thoughts, and come up with suggestions to improve the story.

Even when your script pages are not being read in class, you must participate in workshop discussions. This is not only part of your grade, but also a way to develop your critical analytical skills.

For more, see separate post on the D2L site called Constructive Critique.

Attendance

Missing 2 classes or more without a legitimate excuse will result in a reduction of your final grade. If you do have a legitimate reason for missing class, you must email me in advance of the class for it to be considered an excused absence. We begin class right on time. A pattern of tardiness will result in a grade reduction.

Office Hours and One On One Meetings

WED 5:00-6:00PM, THU 3:00-4:00PM in CDM 403. Drop by or schedule a meeting. I am happy to talk with you about the course content or anything related to the movie and TV business, screenwriting, writing in general, career considerations, etc.

In addition, we will schedule **two one on one meetings** during the quarter to discuss your story and any issues you may be having with the script process.

Workshop Guidelines

Students should expect to read, hear, and participate in discussions about some stories which include varied subject matter including sex, drugs, alcohol, violence, politics, religion, and so forth.

During class discussions, you are expected to be respectful of everyone's opinion. Personal attacks and disruptive actions will not be tolerated.

In general, we want to create a positive evaluative environment where we acknowledge what works in a story, issues and concerns, and brainstorm possible solutions and suggestions.

Laptops/Cell Phones

If your computer and the mind attached to it drift away from class, and I so much as suspect you of online activities not related to the task at hand, you will lose laptop privileges for the entire quarter. In addition, during the screening of video clips, laptops must be closed. Phones must be silenced and stowed.

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 the professor. Plagiarism will earn you an immediate F in this course.

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](#) or via a mobile device in class during the Week 9 session.