

DePaul University
School of Cinematic Arts

DC 507 / 509: Writing for Film Thesis II / Writing for TV Thesis II

Winter 2018

Tuesday 5:45 – 9:00PM, Daley 207 and Online

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

Office Hours: (CDM 403) TUE 2:00-4:00PM, WED 12:00-1:00PM and by appointment.

Description

Students revise and polish the first draft of their thesis screenplay. This script is to serve as the culminating piece in the MFA writing portfolio and must be approved by a vote of the thesis committee for degree conferral.

Objectives

- Analyze notes received from peers and thesis committee
- Design a rewrite plan to address those notes
- Complete professional, deadline-driven script revisions
- Evaluate others' revisions objectively, comprehensively, and with tact

Outcomes

- Complete revision plan
- Complete script revision plus a polish
- Delivery of the revised draft of the thesis screenplay
- TV writers: Create a pitch 'bible'

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 announcements, assignments, and additional reading materials.

The class will be divided into two groups (A, B). Beginning with Week 3, each group will be responsible for rewriting and uploading the equivalent of 2 sequences (20-30 pages) for in-class group discussion. Writers working on TV pilot scripts will need to present 1-2 rewritten acts (15-25 pages) per workshop session.

Weekly writing assignments are due by **5PM Sunday**. Upload to the appropriate Submissions forum on the D2L site.

All written assignments must be typed with pages numbered. Title page:

Your Name

Course Number

Date

Writing Assignment: [Name of assignment]

Format: PDF.

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

MAKE SURE YOU PROOFREAD, SPELLCHECK, AND GRAMMAR-CHECK YOUR PAGES BEFORE UPLOADING YOUR WRITING ASSIGNMENT.

Schedule

WEEK 1 (January 2): Discuss revision process; Notes review; Rewrite Plan: Part 1; Select Groups A and B; Set one-on-one meetings.

WEEK 2 (January 9): Small Groups (A and B) – Discuss each student’s preliminary Rewrite Plan; Rewrite Plan: Part 2.

WEEK 3 (January 16): Group A -- Feature Writers, Act One; TV Writers, Tease, Act One.

WEEK 4 (January 23): Group B -- Feature Writers, Act One; TV Writers, Tease, Act One.

WEEK 5 (January 30): Group A -- Feature Writers, Act Two, Part A; TV Writers, Acts Two and Three. Final Rewrite Plan due.

WEEK 6 (February 6): Group B -- Feature Writers, Act Two, Part A; TV Writers, Acts Two and Three.

WEEK 7 (February 13): Group A -- Feature Writers, Act Two, Part B; TV Writers, Act Four, Tag.

WEEK 8 (February 20): Group B -- Feature Writers, Act Two, Part B; TV Writers, Act Four, Tag.

WEEK 9 (February 27): Group A -- Feature Writers, Act Three; TV Writers, Pitch Bible.

WEEK 10 (March 6): Group B -- Feature Writers, Act Three; TV Writers, Pitch Bible.

The final revised thesis scripts are due to committee members by March 13th at 8:15PM.

Procedures

Classes may include lectures but will always feature a workshop session. Students will be divided into two groups to maximize attention on the greatest amount of material possible. **It is vitally important all students submit work on time, and that all students pre-read the material thoroughly before class to offer detailed notes.**

Beginning **Week 3**, work must be submitted to D2L by **midnight on Sunday**. We need two days of reading time. If it is not delivered on time, it cannot be critiqued.

Grading

25%: Writing Assignments. Students will receive maximum credit by (A) uploading their assignments by the due date and time, and (B) submitting the required minimum pages. Their score will be docked 1 point for every half-day the assignment is late and 1 point for every two pages shy of required minimum pages.

25%: Class Participation. Participation is absolutely crucial. I expect you to read the material, contribute great notes, and maintain a positive, supportive attitude in the room. For reference, re-read “Reflections on Constructive Critique” available on the D2L site.

I want to know that you read the material by the way in which you discuss it in class.

25%: Rewrite Plan. A complete, thorough Rewrite Plan is due by class time on **Tuesday, January 30th**.

25%: Final Revised Draft. Students will receive maximum credit for submitting their Final Revised Draft by the due date and time: **Tuesday, March 13 at 8:15PM**. Creative quality will be taken into account on the Final Revised Draft per the SCA Screenwriting Grading Rubric which is available for download on the D2L site.

These values are minimums for each grade:

| | | | |
|----|----------|----|---------|
| A | = 93-100 | B- | = 80-83 |
| A- | = 90-92 | C+ | = 77-79 |
| B+ | = 87-89 | C | = 74-76 |
| B | = 84-86 | C- | = 70-73 |

C- is the minimum passing grade.

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

TUE 2:00-4:00PM, WED Noon-1:00PM 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 a **one on one meeting** with each student during the first two weeks of the quarter to discuss their story and Rewrite Plan.

In-Class Workshops

By enrolling in this course, you agree to share your ideas and writings with the professor and other students in the class. You must acquire express written consent from any writer in the class should you wish to share their work with someone who is not enrolled in this course. Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. We must respect each other, our collaboration, and the work at hand. Be truthful, but sensitive when giving notes. Be prepared to solve problems instead of just pointing them out.

Creative Subject Matter

As this is a creative writing course, controversial subject matter may enter into the conversation. 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. Students have the right to express themselves artistically in their writing and address challenging issues.

If you become uncomfortable with a conversation for personal reasons, you may be excused for the remainder of that class without penalty. Inclusion of individuals from the class, or direct personal attacks on members of the class will not be tolerated in course material. If you feel you are being individually targeted by material written or discussed in class, please inform the instructor as soon as possible.

Decorum and 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.

Laptops/Cell Phones

Since we will be needing to access the D2L site in order to facilitate our workshop sessions, bring your laptop to class. Or you may access the D2L site on your smart phone or iPad.

I will trust that on your honor as a DePaul University student and as a creative individual who aspires to learn the writing craft, you will not stray into any form of social media during class – except for classroom breaks.

Phones must be silenced and stowed unless needed for course work.

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.