

DePaul University School of Cinematic Arts

DC 346/445: Scene Writing

Winter, 2018

Monday, 5:45-9:00PM

Loop Campus: 14 East Jackson, Room 207

Professor Brad Riddell: brad.riddell@depaul.edu, 312-362-5212

Office Hours: Mondays from 1:00-5:30 PM in CDM 521

DC 346 Course Description

This course focuses on analyzing and developing the fundamental building block of film and television writing: the scene. Students will gain a greater understanding of how to craft engaging scenes and refine their unique voice on the page through weekly lectures, writing exercises, and workshops. Prerequisites: DC 101 or DC 201

DC 445 Course Description

This advanced course asks students to move beyond convention in an effort to deconstruct the core elements of a scene: location, subject, conflict, and exposition. Through weekly lectures, writing exercises, and workshops we will examine a number of innovative screenwriting techniques to refine the writer's unique voice and enhance the commercial viability of their work. Prerequisites: None

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- recognize various scene types in a screenplay or film
- express the narrative function(s) of given scenes in a screenplay or film
- apply the scene techniques they've studied in class to their own writing
- revise their scenes based on feedback from the professor and their peers
- evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

Outcomes:

Students will complete a portfolio of rewritten and polished scenes that may be original to this course or curated from their existing work.

Textbooks:

None

Course Management:

This course is managed on **D2L**.

Schedule

- Week 1, January 8: Course introduction.
- Week 2, January 15: **No class.**
- Week 3, January 22: Direct Conflict Scene due.
- Week 4, January 29: Indirect Conflict Scene due.
- Week 5, February 5: Dialogue Heavy Scene due.
- Week 6, February 12: Entrances Scene due.
- Week 7, February 19: Exposition/Baggage/Life Dream scene due.
- Week 8, February 26: Action/Suspense/Comedy scene due.
- Week 9, March 5: Montages and Transitions scenes due.
- Week 10, March 12: Exits and Polarity scenes due.
- Week 11, March 19: Final Rewritten Scenes Portfolio due by 6:00 PM.

Assignments

There are eight writing assignments. The final exam consists of your entire portfolio of revised scenes. Each grad student will give one ten-minute presentation on a scene type we are discussing in class. Those assignments will be made after the first class.

Each week you should post your assignment to **Submissions** and **Discussions**, and also **bring one hard copy to class.**

Active participation in the conversation each week is a requirement that I take very seriously. Receiving feedback but failing to return the favor is a cardinal offense, as is dominating or disrupting the conversation, or personally attacking a writer.

- Weekly Scene Work: 10 points each (80)
- Weekly Participation: 10 points each (90)
- Grad Student Scene Presentation: 10 Points
- Final Portfolio of Revised Scenes: 100 Points

Grading:

Late work will not be accepted. 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-level work will meet the parameters given for the assignment, present professional format, a unique style, originality of voice, and excellent overall execution.

Work that contains grammatical errors, misspellings, or generally poor and unclear writing will rarely if ever achieve a grade of **A** or **B**.

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.

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.

Creative Subject Matter

As this is a creative writing class, controversial subject matter may make its way into the conversation. Students have every right to express themselves artistically in their writing and address challenging issues so long as the work does not glorify hate of any kind. If you become uncomfortable with a conversation for personal reasons, you may be excused from the remainder of that class without penalty. Obvious inclusion of individuals from the class will not be tolerated in submitted material.

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 students will be notified via email.

Online Course Evaluations

Instructor and course evaluations provide valuable feedback that can improve teaching and learning. The greater the level of participation, the more useful the results. As students, you are in the unique position to view the instructor over time. Your comments about what works and what doesn't can help faculty build on the elements of the course that are strong and improve those that are weak. Isolated comments from students and instructors' peers may also be helpful, but evaluation results based on high response rates may be statistically reliable (believable). As you experience this course and material, think about how your learning is impacted. Your honest opinions about your experience in and commitment to the course and your learning may help improve some components of the course for the next group of students. Positive comments also show the department chairs and college deans the commitment of instructors to the university and teaching evaluation results are one component used in annual performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard on an important issue – the quality of teaching at DePaul. Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. The university and school policy on plagiarism can be summarized as follows: Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment which has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials be sure to consult the instructor.

Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the Campus Connection system (<http://campusconnect.depaul.edu>). Withdrawals processed via this system are effective the day on which they are made. Simply ceasing to attend, or notifying the instructor, or nonpayment of tuition, does not constitute an official withdrawal from class and will result in academic as well as financial penalty.

Retroactive Withdrawal

This policy exists to assist students for whom extenuating circumstances prevented them from meeting the withdrawal deadline. During their college career students may be allowed one medical/personal administrative withdrawal and one college office administrative withdrawal, each for one or more courses in a single term. Repeated requests will not be considered. Submitting an appeal for retroactive withdrawal does not guarantee approval.

College office appeals for CDM students must be submitted online via MyCDM. The deadlines for submitting appeals are as follows:

Autumn Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent winter quarter
 Winter Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent spring quarter
 Spring Quarter: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter
 Summer Terms: Last day of the last final exam of the subsequent autumn quarter

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.

Incomplete

An incomplete grade is a special, temporary grade that may be assigned by an instructor when unforeseeable circumstances prevent a student from completing course requirements by the end of the term and when otherwise the student had a record of satisfactory progress in the course. CDM policy requires the student to initiate the request for incomplete grade before the end of the term in which the course is taken. Prior to submitting the incomplete request, the student must discuss the circumstances with the instructor. Students may initiate the incomplete request process in MyCDM. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptions cases will receive such approval. If approved, students are required to complete all remaining course requirement independently in consultation with the instructor by the deadline indicated on the incomplete request form. By default, an incomplete grade will automatically change to a grade of F after two quarters have elapsed (excluding summer) unless another grade is recorded by the instructor. An incomplete grade does NOT grant the student permission to attend the same course in a future quarter.

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:
Student Center, LPC, Suite #370
Phone number: (773)325.1677