

DC 304 Topics in Screenwriting/Advanced Topics in Screenwriting

Autumn 2018, Thursday 5:45 – 9:00PM
14 East Jackson, Room 211

Instructor: Anna Hozian

Office: CDM 463
Office Hours: TH: 1:30 to 4:30 PM
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Summary of Course

Advanced study in screenwriting focusing on a specific genre each quarter such as: Science Fiction, Film Noir, Comedy, Action-Adventure, Nonfiction, etc. May be repeated for credit.

Course Outcomes

In addition to weekly analytical or developmental character exercises, students will complete a character bible, world breakdown, and execution plan for a new ensemble comedy.

Prerequisites:

DC 101 or DC 201

Course Objectives

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

- define common breakdowns of television comedies and their archetypes
- analyze how characters' arcs evolved over nine seasons of *The Office* and how the characters were initially created that allowed for their evolution
- apply character and story generation tools in their own creative character work
- design an ensemble cast of characters and an execution plan in how to develop these characters into a work for television or the web
- evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

Course Management

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to: <https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/home> and enter using your campus connect username and password. Once you are logged on, click on the course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, materials, weekly assignments, etc.

Attendance Policy

Attendance and participation are mandatory. An unexcused absence, which is defined as not showing up to class or arriving more than 10 minutes late — or leaving early — constitutes a reduction in your participation grade. See below:

Attend all Classes and Participate: 10 points

One Unexcused Absence/Do Not Participate: 5 points
Two Unexcused Absences/Do Not Participate: 0 points
Three Unexcused Absences/Do Not Participate: Fail the Course

Grading Policy

Class Attendance and participation: 10 points
Analysis Breakdown (Five Exercises): 35 points total (7 points each)
Creative Exercises (Four Exercises): 35 points (7 points each)
Final (Character/World Development plus web series outline or pilot summary for Advanced DC405 Students): 20 points

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, F is substantially unsatisfactory.

Course Outline

Week One

Thurs. 09/06 Class Intros and Lecture: *Ricky Gervais, Stephen Merchant, and the Creation and Execution of "Seedy Boss"*

WATCH: Season One, *The Office: An American Workplace*

ANALYSIS ONE: *Michael Scott*

Week Two

Thurs. 09/13: LECTURE: *The Ensemble: The Players Surrounding "Seedy Boss"*

WATCH: Season Two, *The Office: An American Workplace*

ANALYSIS TWO: *Pam, Jim, Dwight & the other players*

Week Three

Thurs. 09/20: LECTURE: *Tension and Hyperbole: Relationships in The Office and the Basis of Humor*

WATCH: Season Three, *The Office: An American Workplace*

ANALYSIS THREE: *Character Wheels and BIG Actions Creating Tension*

Week Four

Thurs. 09/27: LECTURE: *How Did Dunder Mifflin Become Near (and Dear) to Us? Creating Empathy and Sympathy for Characters*

WATCH: Season Four: *The Office: An American Workplace*

ANALYSIS FOUR: *Character Actions & the 10% of the Heart*

Week Five

Thurs. 10/04: LECTURE: *The Office and the World Around It: The Importance (and Intelligence) of Humor — The What and Why Now?*

WATCH: Selected Episodes of *The Office: An American Workplace*

ANALYSIS FIVE: *Dunder Mifflin, Scranton, and America: Character Maps*

Week Six

Thurs. 10/11: LECTURE: *Character Evolution: Plants, Payoffs, and Arcs over Nine Seasons*

CREATIVE ONE: *Your Five Potential Main Players.*

Week Seven

Thurs. 10/18: WORKSHOP: Choosing Your Main Player

CREATIVE TWO: *Bios, Questionnaires, and Supporting Cast (Be ready to discuss them – and the potential world they may inhabit)*

Week Eight

Thurs. 10/25: WHOLE-GROUP DISCUSSION: Your World Options

CREATIVE THREE: *Interviews and Monologues: Choose one to read/perform (WORLD DEFINED)*

Week Nine

Thurs. 11/01: PERFORMANCE of MONOLOGUES

CREATIVE FOUR: *Your execution plan and pitch*

Week Ten

Thurs. 11/08: (CREATIVE FIVE) *THE PITCHES: Your characters, your world and your plan for execution*

FINAL:

Character Bible and World Breakdown Completed along with Execution Plan

For DC405 ADVANCED TOPICS students: You must submit the Character Bible, World Breakdown, and Execution Plan as well as you must have EITHER: All Web Series Episodes outlined for the first season OR a Full Series Pilot Summarized.

Assignments

Analysis and Creative Assignments

You will execute a total of FIVE analytical exercises prior to completing FIVE creative exercises (including a pitch), all which will lead you to develop your own world of characters and plan for a comedic series.

Please save files as a PDF, and use your last name and the name of the assignment:
YourNameInterrogationScene.pdf

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 his/her 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 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:

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 semester. 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 your professor. But know this: plagiarism will earn you an 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](#).