

**DePaul University**  
**School of Cinematic Arts**

**DC 497/498 Thesis Development**

Spring 2019

Thursday 5:45 – 9:00PM, Daley 211

Professor Anna Hozian: [ahozian@depaul.edu](mailto:ahozian@depaul.edu)

203-461-1230

Office Hours: (CDM 463) TUE 10:15AM-1:15PM and by appointment.

**Description**

Students will develop a feature-length thesis screenplay or television pilot in preparation for writing the first draft of their project in DC 506 or 508. The development process will include assignments designed to aid students in choosing their thesis project, fostering a strong personal connection to that project, creating compelling three-dimensional characters, and designing a clear, effective narrative structure for the screenplay or pilot. This course will culminate with a completed feature scene-by-scene outline or scene-by-scene outline for a TV pilot.

**Objectives**

- Students will be able to evaluate and compare the merits of multiple projects before making a selection as to what they will write.
- Students will be able to define their motivations and priorities in the stories they choose to tell.
- Students will be able to apply a unique and repeatable process to story development.
- Students will be able to demonstrate the ability to maintain the creative environment of a professional writer's room.
- Students will be able to complete outstanding creative writing on a deadline.

**Outcomes**

- A personal statement of purpose for the thesis project.
- A logline and one-two page treatment.
- A professional-quality pitch of up to ten minutes.
- A detailed scene-by-scene outline for a feature screenplay or scene-by-scene outline for a TV pilot.

**Required Reading**

Provided by Instructor via D2L.

**Course Management**

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. There students will find announcements, reading and writing assignments, and additional materials. Each week's recorded sessions (available shortly after 9PM each Thursday) will be available here:

<https://col.cdm.depaul.edu>.

**A significant target date is Week 8 where each student will pitch to a committee of faculty advisers. We will work on two practice pitches in advance of the formal pitch to give students sufficient story development and rehearsal time.**

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

*Your Name*

*Course Number*

*Date*

*Writing Assignment: [Name of assignment]*

Save your writing assignments as PDFs and with this file name (see example):

*Assignment 1 Chayefsky*

*Assignment 2 Ephron*

Writing assignments are due each **TUESDAY by 5PM**. Each week you must post your assignment to **Submissions AND to the appropriate Discussion Forum**.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1 – March April 4**

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

*Lecture:* Story Concepts and Personal Connections; Workshop Overview

*Assignment:*

Movie Writers: 5-10 story concepts

TV Writers: 3-5 series concepts

### **Week 2 – April 11**

Story concept discussion and group workshop

*Lecture:* Protagonist and Character Treatments

*Assignment:* Protagonist Character Treatment

### **Week 3 – April 18**

Protagonist Character Treatment discussion and group workshop

*Lecture:* Master Brainstorming List

*Assignment:* Master Brainstorming List

### **Week 4 – April 25**

Master Brainstorming List discussion and group workshop

*Lecture:* Character Archetypes and Subplots

*Assignment:* Supporting Cast

### **Week 5 – May 2**

Supporting Cast discussion and group workshop

*Lecture:* Primary Plotline Points and Sequences (Movie) / Pilot Structure (TV)

*Assignment:* Primary Plotline Points and Sequences (Movie) / Pilot Structure (TV)

**Week 6 – May 9**

Five Primary Plotline Points / Pilot Structure discussion and workshop

*Lecture:* On Pitching

*Assignment:* Pitch Treatment

**Week 7 – May 16**

Pitch trial runs

*Lecture:* Plotting and the Magical Power of Index Cards

Schedule one-on-one in-office pitch rehearsals

*Assignment:* Index Cards

**Week 8 – May 23**

Index card discussion and group workshop

*Lecture:* True Beat Sheet

*Assignment:* True Beat Sheet

**Week 9 – May 30**

Decompression from Pitches

Beat sheet discussion and group workshop

*Lecture:* Scene-By-Scene Outline

*Assignment:* Scene-by-Scene Outline

**Week 10 – June 6**

Outline discussion and group workshop

*Lecture:* Revising Your Outline

*Assignment:* Revise Outline

**Revised final scene-by-scene outline due in the appropriate D2L Submission Forum by 6:00PM, June 13.**

**Assignments**

There are ten assignments, each worth 8 points.

Also, active participation is requirement in this class. You **MUST READ ALL WORK PRIOR TO CLASS** and **BE PREPARED TO WORKSHOP IT**. If you come unprepared to workshop, you may be asked to leave. Failure to be prepared twice, will constitute a reduction in your grade a full grade level. Receiving feedback but failing to return the favor is a cardinal offense as a writer, as is dominating or disrupting the conversation, or personally attacking a writer.

First Assignment: Ideation (1)                      3 points                      (4)

Other Weekly Assignments (9):                      8 points each                      (72)

Workshop Preparation and Participation (8): 3 points each                      (24)

**TOTAL POINTS:**                                      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.

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](http://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