

DC 201: Introduction to Screenwriting - Spring Quarter 2018 - 2019

TuTh 11:50AM - 1:20PM | 14 E Jackson Room 209

Mar 30, 2019-Jun 14, 2019

Instructor: Lee Madsen

Office: CDM 434 Office hours: TBA

Email: lmadsen3@cdm.depaul.edu (best way to reach me)

This course is an introduction to and overview of the elements of theme, plot, character, and dialogue in dramatic writing for cinema. Emphasis is placed on telling a story in terms of action and the reality of characters. The difference between the literary and visual medium is explored through individual writing projects and group analysis. Development of a synopsis and treatment for a short theatrical screen play: theme, plot, character, mise-en-scene and utilization of cinematic elements.

Prerequisites: None

Course Outcomes: In addition to completing several writing assignments, students are expected to develop, outline, and write a short screenplay.

Learning Objectives:

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

- employ standard screenplay format
- identify elements of scene craft, character development, and narrative structure
- demonstrate expanded visual writing skills
- apply a work-flow process to their creative writing
- produce original writing projects on a deadline
- revise their writing based on feedback from the professor and their peers
- evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

Required Textbook:

- The Hollywood Standard by Christopher Riley ISBN-10: 1932907637

Standards for Achievement:

Grade A:

Student performs in an outstanding way. Student exhibits achievement and

craftsmanship in all work. Creative criteria is exceeded and student challenges him/herself in project development. Student exhibits commitment to expanding ideas, vocabulary and performance.

Grade B:

Student performs beyond the requirement of the project. Student exhibits above average progress and craftsmanship. A creative criterion is exceeded. Student exhibits above average interest in expanding idea, vocabulary, and performance.

Grade C:

Criteria of assignment is met, and all requirements are fulfilled. Student shows average quality work and minimum time and effort on projects. Student shows moderate interest.

Grade D:

Student performance is uneven and below average. Requirements for projects are only partially fulfilled. Minimal interest is shown and attendance, participation and involvement are inadequate.

Grade F

Student fails to meet minimum course requirements and shows little interest. Levels of participation and craftsmanship are extremely poor. Student's attendance/presence is inadequate.

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

Grading

Class Attendance, Participation 10%

Daily Journal 10%

First Draft of Screenplay 10%

Midterm 15%

Assignments 1-6 30%

Final Script 25%

Extra credit assignments

SPRING QUARTER CLASS SCHEDULE

Class 1 Tuesday April 2nd

Introduction to the course and syllabus What are your favorite movies/tv shows? Why we tell stories. Why we write. What to write about. Screenwriting vs. novels and plays.

Final Script guidelines

Intro to Loglines

ASSIGNMENTS:

Journal (10%): Start your journals. These must be hand written, in a notebook or journal book. Write at least one page a day, every day, including weekends from now until the end of the quarter. Put the date and time on each page before you start writing. These pages can be about anything: your day, what you fed your dog, your annoying neighbor, the dream you had, how you felt when you were 7 and your best friends decided that you were bossy and didn't want to talk to you anymore, wait, that was me. You don't have to be profound or insightful, (but it's okay if you are). The idea here is to get you in the habit of writing. I will not read your pages. I will, however, scan them while I count the number of pages you produce. **THIS IS WORTH 10% OF YOUR GRADE** (a full letter grade). **DUE:** Last day of class. **FORMAT:** Handwritten in a notebook or journal (to be returned during the final exam class period) Ask me why it has to be hand written...

Assignment 1 (3%): Write 3 Log-lines for potential final short scripts for this class.

DUE: Thursday be prepared to pitch them to the class.

FORMAT: Typed, PRINTED and brought to class, also uploaded to D2L by class start

WATCH: Star Wars (Episode IV-The Original) if you haven't seen it. Re-watch it if it has been a while.

READ: The Hollywood Standard by Christopher Riley

Book Report/Discussion #1 (3%): List 5 items from the reading that will be germane to your work in this course or provoked thought about writing or storytelling. One-word responses are not acceptable. These are meant to be public and you will post them on D2L in the discussion forum. You must also comment on at least two posts for full credit. Please don't wait till the last minute to do these posts as other people need to read your thoughts in order to comment.

DUE:

FORMAT: uploaded to D2L by class start

Class 2 Thursday April 4th

DUE: Reading IN CLASS: What is a Screenplay? Three act structure. The Subject.

Plot points introduced. **Assignment 2 (5%):** 3-Act Structure--See D2L for assignment details **DUE:** Tuesday **FORMAT:** Typed, uploaded to D2L

READ:

Class 3 Tuesday April 9th

DUE: Assignment 1: Loglines I

N CLASS: Read aloud and pitch potential scripts to the class and choose which story you will develop for your final project ASSIGNMENTS: NONE

Class 4 Thursday April 11th

DUE: Assignment 2: 3 Act Structure

IN CLASS: Story and Character. Obstacles. Character Arcs. Build a character exercise. Character intro example.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment 3 (3%): Bring two (2) great character intros from produced screenplays.

You don't need to write these, you just need to copy and paste them from a screenplay.

DUE: Tuesday 16th - D2L Submission

Online script resources: script-o-rama.com, www.sfy.ru/scripts, www.awesomefilm.com, www.scriptfly.com, www.simplyscripts.com

READ:

Class 5 Tuesday April 16th

DUE: Assignment 3: Character intros from produced screenplays, read aloud in class

IN CLASS: Read Character intros. Endings and Beginnings. Two Incidents.

Watch Short Films

ASSIGNMENTS: Assignment 4 (5%): Character Bio, Craft a character bio for your protagonist. See description on D2L for details. DUE: April 23rd (Class 7) FORMAT:

Typed, uploaded to D2L

READ:

Class 6 Thursday April 18th

DUE: Reading

IN CLASS:

Treatments. Step Outlines. Plot Points review. Building the Story.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment 5 (6%): Write a step outline of your final project

DUE: Tuesday 10/4

FORMAT: Typed, PRINTED and brought to class, ALSO, submitted to D2L Submission.

Class 7 Tuesday April 23rd

DUE: Assignment 4 Character Bio DUE: Reading IN CLASS: Scenes. Sequences.

ASSIGNMENTS: NONE. (*Think about your short film idea and watch short films).

Class 8 Thursday April 25th

DUE: Assignment 5- Step Outlines due IN CLASS: Presentation/Discussion of Step Outlines

ASSIGNMENTS: Write a scene

Class 9 Tuesday April 30th

DUE: Write a Scene

Watch short films and discuss.

Class 10 Thursday May 2nd

DUE: Write a Scene

The Screenplay format Software Final Draft and Celtx Genre

ASSIGNMENTS: Assignment 6 (8%): Genre assignment—A man and a woman arrive separately to a bookstore. She is concealing something in her clothing. He has a secret. Write 2 different 3-5 page scenes using the proper screenplay format. Include a clear beginning middle and end to the scene (think of it as a very short film).

Choose 2 from the following genres: a. An Action film b. A Drama c. A Romantic Comedy d. A Mystery or Thriller DUE: Thursday May 9th FORMAT: PDF Uploaded to D2L

Class 11 Tuesday May 7th

DUE: Nothing IN CLASS: Dialogue good and bad Efficiency of words Good Exposition and bad ASSIGNMENTS: Continue working on your Genre scenes READ:

Class 12 Thursday May 9th

DUE: Genre Scenes

IN CLASS: Midterm Review Watch short films ASSIGNMENTS: Study for the test

Class 13 Tuesday May 14th

DUE: Nothing IN CLASS: Midterm (15%)

Class 14 Thursday May 16th

IN CLASS: Business -Copyright -Pitching. Read Genre Scenes. Watch short film to inspire. One on One conferences with anyone who needs advice/help etc.

ASSIGNMENTS: ASSIGNMENT: Begin writing your final screenplays (10%). First 5 pages DUE next week. FORMAT: Export to PDF & Uploaded to D2L Dropbox

Class 15 Tuesday May 21st

DUE: First 5 pages of your screenplay

IN CLASS:

Table read selected genre scenes, give feedback/criticism

ASSIGNMENTS:

Continue writing your final screenplays. Second 5 pages DUE Thursday

FORMAT: Export to PDF & Uploaded to D2L Submissions.

Class 16 Thursday May 23rd

DUE: Second 5 pages of screenplay due IN CLASS: Table read a volunteer's first draft. One on One conferences with anyone who needs advice/help etc.

ASSIGNMENTS: Complete first draft of your screenplay DUE Tuesday 11/8.

FORMAT: CELTX PROJECT uploaded to D2L. It is important that you provide me with a CELTX project and not a PDF for the completed first draft so I can make notes in the actual script/ project and return them to you. Please send me the complete/ combined script not just the final 5 pages.

Class 17 Tuesday May 28th

DUE: First Drafts due - EXPORT TO PDF & UPLOADED TO D2L DROPBOX

IN CLASS:

Table Reading and Critique of screenplays in groups.

Please bring copies of your script (1 for each character in your script, 1 for you and 1 for me) at the least you're bringing 3 copies and that's only if you have one character. Most likely it will be around 6 copies.

ASSIGNMENTS: Revise first drafts.

Class 18 Thursday May 30th

DUE: Nothing

IN CLASS:

Table Reading and Critique of screenplays in groups ASSIGNMENTS: Revise first drafts

Class 19 Tuesday June 4th

DUE: Nothing IN CLASS: Table Reading and Critique of screenplays in groups

ASSIGNMENTS: Revise first drafts. Journals and any extra credit assignments due Thursday

Class 20 Thursday June 6th

DUE: Final drafts. Journals. Any Extra Credit Assignments. IN CLASS: Table Reading of scripts. Final Drafts (25%) due at the beginning of the class period (uploaded to D2L) 4 or 5 of these will be read aloud in class, if selected for class reading, please bring copies of your final script to class (1 for each character, 1 for you, and one for me - probably around 6 copies). Attendance to this class is mandatory. If you do not attend class you will receive a 0 on your final draft! This draft is worth 25% of your grade.

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 sent via email.

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.

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.

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: <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx>

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

Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296

Course Policies as Suggested by the Dean of Students Office

Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

Class Discussion: Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

Attitude: A professional and academic attitude is expected throughout this course. Measurable examples of non-academic or unprofessional attitude include but are not limited to: talking to others when the instructor is speaking, mocking another's opinion, cell phones ringing, emailing, texting or using the internet whether on a phone or computer. If any issues arise a student may be asked to leave the classroom. The professor will work with the Dean of Students Office to navigate such student issues.

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.

Cell Phones/On Call: If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undistruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.