

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

School of Cinematic Arts | Spring 2019

DC 303 / 404 Rewriting the Feature – Section 902 | TUES 5:45-9:00PM | Lewis - Room 1512

Instructor: Kat O'Brien | Email: kobrie55@depaul.edu

Office Hours: Daley 200B THURS 10:30AM-1:30PM and by appointment

DESCRIPTION

This class focuses on rewriting the feature film screenplay. Through workshops and course discussions, students will learn how to identify missteps in their writing and develop a practical means to efficiently address these issues moving forward. **Students must possess a complete feature length script to rewrite in order to enroll in the course.**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop a solid understanding of the craft and tools of screenplay revision
- Formulate a viable rewriting plan for their feature length screenplay
- Analyze peer scripts to identify narrative concerns and articulate constructive feedback
- Create a polished, professional, feature-length spec screenplay

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Viable Rewrite Plan
- Story Development Notes
- Polished, professional, feature-length screenplay
- 404: Story Bible and One Page Pitch Document

PREREQUISITES

None

REQUIRED READING

Instructor will provide resources

COURSE MANAGEMENT

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. There students will find the syllabus, course outline, announcements, reading and writing assignments, discussion boards, and additional materials. Log in to D2L enter using your campus connect logon and password. Once you are logged in, click on the course number link and you will find our home page and links to the course content.

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, every student will have three workshop sessions. The first session will focus on your current draft, the second on your rewrite plan, and the third on the first 50 pages of your rewrite.

In Week 1, the class will be divided into small groups. Each class session will involve breaking off into smaller groups to workshop each student's story.

***NOTE: You are responsible for reading each of your group's weekly writing assignments before every class session, unless otherwise noted.**

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One: April 2

LECTURE: Course Intro, The Art of the Rewrite

WORKSHOP: Intentions: Pitch, Set Up, Outline, Story Bible; Group Feedback

ASSIGNMENT ONE: *Intentions; Read scripts due in class next week (4/9)*

404 ONLY: *Start working on Pitch and Story Bible due May 10; Revised due June 11*

Week Two: April 9

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: How To Give and Get Story Notes

ASSIGNMENT TWO: *Story Notes next week (4/16)*

Week Three: April 16 ONLINE CLASS

ONLINE CLASS: Peer Notes Meeting

→ *Recap Notes Meeting in Discussion Forum online today (4/16)*

ASSIGNMENT THREE: *Notes Overview due in class next week (4/23) 10%*

Week Four: April 23

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: The Rewrite Plan

ASSIGNMENT FOUR: *Rewrite Plan due in class next week (4/30) 20%*

Week Five: April 30

WORKSHOP: Individual Story Meetings (Re: Rewrite Plan)

ASSIGNMENT FIVE : *Rewrite Feature (Act 1) due in class next week (5/7)*

Week Six: May 7

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Pitch, Set Up, Structure

ASSIGNMENT SIX: *Rewrite Feature (Act 2A); P. 1-50 due Friday May 10 at 9AM (30%)*

404 ONLY: *Also due: Rough Draft One Pager; Story Bible check*

Week Seven: May 14

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Individual Story Meetings (Re: Pages 1-50)

ASSIGNMENT SEVEN: *Rewrite Feature (Act 2B) due in class next week (5/21)*

Week Eight: May 21

WORKSHOP: Character Arc of Transformation, Theme

ASSIGNMENT EIGHT: *Rewrite Feature (Act 3) due in class next week (5/28)*

Week Nine: May 28

WORKSHOP: Complexity: Grace Notes & Relationship Arcs

ASSIGNMENT NINE: *Second Pass due in class next week (6/4)*

Week Ten: June 4

WORKSHOP: Streamlining Action, Punch-Up Dialogue, Consistency

ASSIGNMENT TEN: *Final Pass (P. 50-100) due Final Exam Week June 11 at 5:45PM*

404 ONLY: *Also due: Final One Pager; Story Bible*

FINAL: REWRITE PART II (PAGES 50-100) due JUNE 11 at 5:45 PM

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance / Participation is mandatory and will count as 10% of your overall grade. An absence, which is defined as not showing up to class or arriving more than 10 minutes late to class, constitutes a reduction in your overall grade.

Assignments

Some of the weekly assignments will be reviewed as progress checks towards your Attendance / Participation grade (10%). The following are the Big Assignments, that will comprise the majority of your grade for this class:

Notes Overview (10% of Final Grade)

After your [Peer] Notes Meeting, complete the **Notes Overview template** (available to download on D2L) using feedback on your feature length screenplay from the instructor, workshop, self-evaluation and Peer Notes Meeting. These vetted concerns should be listed as bullet points under each category heading. Feel free to edit the headings to align with the notes you received and order them by priority. It is important to do a thorough job on this, as the Notes Overview will act as the foundation for your Rewrite Plan. You are expected to submit a PDF copy of the Notes Overview to D2L **Tuesday April 23 by 545PM.**

Rewrite Plan (20% of Final Grade)

Complete the **Rewrite Plan template** (available to download on D2L). Each chart heading is broken into two categories (Concerns/Solutions). The concerns should be taken from your Note Overview assignment, broken into the appropriate categories, and then order by priority. Across from each concern, list possible solutions. The length of your Rewrite Plan will depend on the amount of work that needs to be done. Keep the cause-and-effect nature of cinematic storytelling in mind. You must consider the effect these alterations will have on the rest of the narrative. It is important to do a thorough job on this rewrite plan, as it will act as the foundation for your feature length rewrite. Please submit a PDF copy to D2L **Tuesday April 30 by 545PM.** We'll workshop these Rewrite Plans 1x1 and in small groups during class this week.

Pages 1-50 (30% of Final Grade)

You are expected to submit pages 1-50 of your revised feature length screenplay to D2L by **Friday May 10 at 9AM. 404 ONLY: Also due: Rough Draft One Pager; Story Bible check**

Tips to keep in mind, as this assignment is 30% of your final grade:

- The revised draft should read as a marked improvement over your first effort.
- Use your rewrite plan in order to craft your revised draft.
- Your revised script must be at least 50 pages.
- Show don't tell. Show don't tell. Show don't tell. Show don't tell.
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation count - Proofread your work, proofread it again, and then proofread it one more time just to be sure.
- Re-read your narrative for clarity - It may be a good idea to have a friend/family member look over the script as well.
- Standard screenwriting formatting is required. Refer to texts for the course, the scripts we read in class, and your instructor for assistance.
- Action description should be lean - Only revealing what can be heard/seen on screen.

- Avoid exposition heavy dialogue - Always ask yourself, "Is there a way I can communicate this information visually?"
- Ask questions if you need help.
- Don't wait until the last minute. It takes time to develop a solid narrative - You won't be able to do it in one night.

Pages 50-100 (30% of Final Grade)

You are expected to submit pages 50-100 of your revised feature length screenplay to D2L on **Tuesday June 11 by 545PM. 404 ONLY: Also due: Final One Pager; Story Bible**

Tips to keep in mind, as this assignment is 30% of your final grade:

- Please submit your entire revised screenplay for continuity.
- The revised draft should read as a marked improvement over your first effort.
- Use your rewrite plan in order to craft your revised draft.
- Your revised script must be at least 50 pages.
- Show don't tell. Show don't tell. Show don't tell. Show don't tell.
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation count - Proofread your work, proofread it again, and then proofread it one more time just to be sure.
- Re-read your narrative for clarity - It may be a good idea to have a friend/family member look over the script as well.
- Standard screenwriting formatting is required. Refer to texts for the course, the scripts we read in class, and your instructor for assistance.
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Grading

Attendance & Participation 10%

Notes Overview 10%

Rewrite Plan 20%

Pages 1-50 30%

Pages 50-100 30%

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 in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work.

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

