

# DC 405 Topics in Screenwriting

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**When:** Monday & Wednesday · 5:45pm - 9:00pm  
**Where:** 14 East Jackson RM 209 Loop Campus

**Instructor:** Matt Quinn · [mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu) · 312-362-5807 · Daley RM 509  
**Office hours:** Monday and Wednesday 4:30pm – 5:30pm

## Summary of Course

Advanced study in screenwriting focusing on a specific genre each quarter such as: Science Fiction, Comedy, Action-Adventure, Nonfiction, etc. The topic this quarter is the developing the limited series.

This course focuses on deconstructing *Stranger Things* to unveil the rise of the limited television series. Through bi-weekly lectures, screenings, and workshops we will examine the post-modern narrative techniques employed in the popular Netflix series in an effort to develop an original pitch package for a limited series.

## Learning Outcomes

- Analyze selected episodes and teleplays from the Netflix series *Stranger Things*.
- Understand the narrative conventions of the limited television series.
- Create a series bible, pilot step outline, and story pitch for an original limited series.
- Demonstrate a clear authorial voice on the page.

## Prerequisites

None

## Grading

Participation	5%
Three Loglines	5%
Limited Series Story Package	10%
Limited Series Bible Rough Draft	10%
Limited Series Bible Final Draft	20%
Limited Series Story Pitch	10%
Limited Series Screening Response	40%

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.

### Textbooks

- “Television Development” by Bob Levy ISBN-10: 1138584231 (Recommended)
- Additional readings provided by instructor

### D2L Lecture Discussion Forum

Participation in the weekly lecture discussion forums is mandatory for online students, as this counts towards your participation grade – Minimum of one post per lecture.

### In-Class Workshops

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, you will be participating in small group workshop sessions throughout the quarter that will enable you to further develop your limited series. Please refer to the course outline for specific workshop dates.

### D2L

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to:  
<https://login.depaul.edu/cas/login?service=https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/orgtools/CAS/Default.aspx>  
 and enter using your campus connect logon and password. Once you are logged on, click on the course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, course outline, video lectures, discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

### Course Outline

#### Class 1 – June 17<sup>th</sup>

Lecture: “Stranger Things” and the Limited Series  
 Screening: “Chapter One: The Vanishing of Will Byers”  
 Assignment: “Chapter One: The Vanishing of Will Byers” Response

#### Class 2 – June 19<sup>th</sup>

Lecture: Developing the Concept  
 Screening: “Chapter Two: The Weirdo on Maple Street”  
 Assignment: “Chapter Two: The Weirdo on Maple Street” Response, Three Loglines

#### Class 3 – June 24<sup>th</sup>

Workshop: Three loglines  
 Lecture: Story and Structure  
 Screening: “Chapter Six: The Monster”

*Assignment: "Chapter Six: The Monster" Response*

#### **Class 4 – June 26<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Tone, Style, and World

Screening: "Chapter Eight: The Upside Down"

*Assignment: "Chapter Eight: The Upside Down" Response, Limited Series Story Package*

#### **Class 5 – July 1<sup>st</sup>**

Workshop: Limited Series Story Package

Screening: "Chapter Two: Trick or Treat, Freak"

*Assignment: "Chapter Two: Trick or Treat, Freak" Response, Limited Series Bible Rough Draft*

#### **Class 6 – July 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Lecture: Characters

Screening: "Chapter Seven: The Lost Sister"

*Assignment: "Chapter Seven: The Lost Sister" Response, Limited Series Bible Rough Draft*

#### **Class 7 – July 8<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Limited Series Bible Rough Draft

Screening: "Chapter Nine: The Gate"

*Assignment: "Chapter Nine: The Gate" Response, Limited Series Final Draft*

#### **Class 8 – July 10<sup>th</sup>**

No Class – Work Day

*Assignment: "Stranger Things" Season 3, Limited Series Bible Final Draft and Story Pitch*

#### **Class 9 – July 15<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Limited Series Bible Final Draft

Screening: "Chapter Eight: The Battle of Starcourt"

*Assignment: "Chapter Eight: The Battle of Starcourt" Response, Limited Series Story Pitch*

#### **Class 10 – July 17<sup>th</sup>**

Limited Series Story Pitch Meetings

## **Assignments**

### **Screening Response Assignments (50% of final grade)**

The instructor will post a topic for you to write about in regards to the episode of "Stranger Things", that was screened. Your response must be a minimum of 250 words, which is essentially

one double spaced typed Word document page. The document must then be saved as a PDF and submitted to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link by the assigned due date. There is a total of eight Screening Response assignments for the quarter, each worth 5 points.

### **Three Loglines (5% of final grade)**

Develop three loglines for a limited television series. You will eventually develop one of these ideas into the series that you will be working on for the duration of the course. Each one sentence logline should include character (protagonist), conflict (what is the central conflict of the narrative?) and a sense of resolution. You must submit the Three Loglines in a document saved as a PDF to the corresponding D2L submission link before class on Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup>.

*In-Class students – Bring a copy of the assignment to pitch in class for workshop on Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup>.*

*Online students – In lieu of presenting in-class, you should post a video of yourself pitching the loglines - just use the camera on your computer or phone. This does not have to be super polished as long as we can see and hear what you are presenting. Ideally, this video should be posted to YouTube, Vimeo, etc. (whatever online video platform you use that's easy for everyone to access) and you should paste a link to this video in your assigned D2L group discussion forum. Make sure you provide a password if you elect to limit access to the video. It's generally not a good idea to try to post large video files directly into D2L as it will take forever to upload/download. This video and Three Logline file must be submitted to your assigned group discussion forum before class on Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Limited Series Story Package (10% of final grade)**

The Story Package is worth a total of 10 points and is broken down into two parts:

- Teaser Pitch - You will present a teaser pitch in-class on Monday, July 1<sup>st</sup> that focuses on a personal connection, characters, plot overview, etc. There are no rules or expected format for the pitch other than making a strong attempt as a team to "sell" your assigned script within the allotted time frame.
- One Sheet – This document must include: Title, contact information, logline, genre, plot overview. One sheets for TV series will differ slightly from a feature one sheet, as they focus more on pivotal character breakdowns and the aim/arc of the series. Examples provided on the D2L Content page. You must submit the One Sheet as a PDF to the corresponding D2L submission link before class on Monday, July 1<sup>st</sup>.

*In-Class students – Bring a copy of the one sheet to workshop on Monday, July 1<sup>st</sup>.*

*Online students – In lieu of presenting in-class, you should post a video of teaser pitch - just use the camera on your computer or phone. This does not have to be super polished as long as we can see and hear what you are presenting. Ideally, this video should be posted to YouTube, Vimeo, etc. (whatever online video platform you use that's easy for everyone to access) and you should*

*paste a link to this video in your assigned D2L group discussion forum. Make sure you provide a password if you elect to limit access to the video. It's generally not a good idea to try to post large video files directly into D2L as it will take forever to upload/download. This video and your One Sheet file must be submitted to your assigned group discussion forum before class on Monday, July 1<sup>st</sup>.*

### **Limited Series Bible Rough Draft (10% of final grade)**

Create a series bible that provides a thorough overview of the limited series. This assignment must be a minimum of 6 pages. While there is no fixed template for a series bible, it should include sections on the following:

- Overview
- Story/Structure
- Tone/Style
- World
- Characters
- Season Breakdown

The Limited Series Bible Rough Draft must be submitted to the corresponding D2L Submission link before class on Monday, July 8th.

*In-Class students – Bring copies of the Limited Series Bible Rough Draft to workshop on Monday, July 8th.*

*Online students – In lieu of presenting in-class, you should post a video of you discussing the current state of the Limited Series Bible Rough Draft (what you like/plan to revise/struggling with) - just use the camera on your computer or phone. This does not have to be super polished as long as we can see and hear what you are presenting. Ideally, this video should be posted to YouTube, Vimeo, etc. (whatever online video platform you use that's easy for everyone to access) and you should paste a link to this video in your assigned D2L group discussion forum. Make sure you provide a password if you elect to limit access to the video. It's generally not a good idea to try to post large video files directly into D2L as it will take forever to upload/download. This video and your Limited Series Bible Rough Draft file must be submitted to your assigned group discussion forum before class on Monday, July 8<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Limited Series Bible Final Draft (10% of final grade)**

Revision of the Limited Series Bible that provides a thorough overview of the series. This assignment must be a minimum of 6 pages. While there is no fixed template for a series bible, it should include sections on the following:

- Overview
- Story/Structure
- Tone/Style

- World
- Characters
- Season Breakdown

The Limited Series Final Draft must be submitted to the corresponding D2L Submission link before class on Monday, July 15th

*In-Class students – Bring copies of the Limited Series Bible Final Draft to workshop on Monday, July 15th.*

*Online students – In lieu of presenting in-class, you should post a video of you discussing the current state of the Limited Series Bible Final Draft (focus on alterations made and any remaining concerns) - just use the camera on your computer or phone. This does not have to be super polished as long as we can see and hear what you are presenting. Ideally, this video should be posted to YouTube, Vimeo, etc. (whatever online video platform you use that's easy for everyone to access) and you should paste a link to this video in your assigned D2L group discussion forum. Make sure you provide a password if you elect to limit access to the video. It's generally not a good idea to try to post large video files directly into D2L as it will take forever to upload/download. This video and your Limited Series Bible Final Draft file must be submitted to your assigned group discussion forum before class on Monday, July 15<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Series Pitch (30% of final grade)**

You will present a 15-minute story pitch for an original limited television series the week of July 15<sup>th</sup> in an individual meeting with the instructor. Sign-up for individual meeting will begin after Class 6.

### **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.

## Changes to the 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

Instructor and 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. Please see <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx> for additional information.

## 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/>.

## 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>

## Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at <http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332>

### Incomplete Grades

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. All incomplete requests must be approved by the instructor of the course and a CDM Associate Dean. Only exceptional cases will receive such approval. Information about the Incomplete Grades policy can be found at <http://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>

### Students with Disabilities

DePaul 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](mailto:csd@depaul.edu).

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