

## DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

School of Cinematic Arts

Story Development | SCRW 301 | 2020 Winter

MON 1:30 – 4:45PM | Daley 211

Instructor: Kat O'Brien | Email: [kobrie55@depaul.edu](mailto:kobrie55@depaul.edu)

Office Hours: ***Please email for appointment.*** MON 10:30AM-1:30PM, Daley 200B

---

### SCRW 301 STORY DEVELOPMENT

This course is designed to help the emerging writer focus their creativity into a viable original project for a feature film. The lectures, workshops, and assignments are designed to enable the student to identify and develop material they have a strong personal connection to. Emphasis is placed on extensive research of the subject matter, creating memorable characters, and crafting a strong dramatic through line. Students will write a vetted step outline for a feature length film that should be completed in SCRW 302.

Prerequisites: SCWR 100 or SCWR 101

Course Outcomes: Feature step outline

Learning Objectives:

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

- apply established narrative techniques toward the development of a feature story with thoroughly developed characters and plot
- utilize storytelling conventions to craft a unique voice for your feature
- create a complete, professional-quality step outline for a feature screenplay
- evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

Required Textbooks:

None

Previous Course Number: DC 300

### COURSE MANAGEMENT

This course is 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.

Throughout the course, you will be asked to workshop each other's stories in class and outside of class by reading work in advance and/or commenting in forums. When writing is not due in class, it will be due a few days prior to allow sufficient time to read and discuss online and/or for class that next week. Upload to that week's Submissions forum and your group's Discussion List forum on D2L.

**\*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: January 6

LECTURE: Course Intro. Overview: Concept to Step Outline

WORKSHOP: Ideation & Story Concepts

**ASSIGNMENT ONE:** 5 possible concepts for a feature film, ready to pitch *due in class today*

### Week Two: January 13

LECTURE: What is this story *about*? Exploring Theme through World and Character

WORKSHOP: Story Bible Development Notes

**ASSIGNMENT TWO:** Story Bible Development Notes *due in class today*

### Week Three: January 20 – ONLINE CLASS

→ **READ:** Lajos Egri's *The Art of Dramatic Writing*, Ch. 3: Character *due next week*

ONLINE WORKSHOP: The Egri Character Bio. Who is your protagonist & why?

**ASSIGNMENT THREE:** Character Bio *due ONLINE today*

### Week Four: January 27

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Loglines and Quick Pitches

**ASSIGNMENT FOUR:** Logline and Quick Pitch for preferred concept *due in class today*

### Week Five: February 3

LECTURE: Story Structure

WORKSHOP: Story Mapping: Character Status Quo and 5 Point Structure

**ASSIGNMENT FIVE:** 5-Point Outline *due in class today*

### Week Six: February 10

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Synopsis and Top 5 Moments

**ASSIGNMENT SIX:** One Page Synopsis (Top 5 Moments) *due in class today*

### Week Seven: February 17

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: The Sequence Outline

**ASSIGNMENT SEVEN:** Sequence Outline *due in class today*

### Week Eight: February 24

WORKSHOP: Beat Sheets and Step Outlines

**ASSIGNMENT EIGHT:** Beat Sheet or Step Outline *due Fri Feb 28 at 9AM*

### Week Nine: March 2

WORKSHOP: Exploring Details via Treatments, Scriptments, Discovery Pages

**ASSIGNMENT NINE:** Rough Draft - Detailed Step Outline *due Fri Mar 6 at 9AM*

### Week Ten: March 9

WORKSHOP: Detailed Step Outline

**ASSIGNMENT TEN:** Revised - Detailed Step Outline for Finals Week *Monday March 16 at 1:30PM*

**FINAL: REVISED FINAL DETAILED STEP OUTLINE due Mon Mar 16 at 1:30 PM**

## COURSE POLICIES

### Attendance

Attendance and participation is mandatory. 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

There are ten weekly assignments to be completed as a product of our ten workshops. Your tenth assignment is your final assignment (there is no exam).

With the exception of Assignment One (Concepts), you must post your assignment to Submissions and Discussions, and also bring a hard copy / digital copy to class.

Active participation is requirement in this class. **You are responsible for reading each of your group's weekly writing assignments before every class session. Come prepared with feedback:**

- Observations/Reflections: What is happening in the story and why?
- Interpretations: Does the story resonate with you? Why? Why not?
- What suggestions you have to resolve those issues and make the story more resonant?

## Grading

Late work will not be accepted and will receive a grade of 0. Your grade in this class will be based on active participation, timely completion of the workshop assignments, and effective incorporation of feedback. Attendance (in class) and Participation (feedback) is factored into your Workshop/Assignment grade each week.

Grade Breakdown: TOTAL 100 Points / 100%

Assignments 1-10: 10 points / 10%

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](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