

DePaul University
School of Cinematic Arts

DC390/490: Topics in Screenwriting: CREATING ICONIC CHARACTERS

Winter 2020, Wednesday 1:30 – 4:45PM

14 East Jackson, Room 211

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203-461-1230

Office Hours: (CDM 463) Tuesdays 10:15am to 1:15pm and 1:45pm to 4:45pm

Course Description

Advanced study in screenwriting focusing on a specific genre each quarter such as: Science Fiction, Film Noir, Comedy, Action-Adventure, Nonfiction, etc. May be repeated for credit.

Course Outcomes

In addition to weekly exercises geared toward executing deeper, more defined characters, students will create a character bible, world breakdown, and execution plan for a TV series, web series, or feature film.

Prerequisites

SCWR101 or SCWR100

Course Objectives:

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

- Define strong character elements across television and film in both drama and comedy
- Analyze how characters are developed in longer works such as feature films and episodic/serialized storytelling
- Apply character and story generation tools in their own creative character work
- Design an execution plan in how to use these characters as the basis for a work for television, film, or the web
- Evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

Course Requirements

You must have access to all content on Netflix that is currently streaming.

Course Management

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to: <https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/home> and enter using your campus connect username and password. Once you

are logged on, click on the course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, materials, weekly assignments, etc.

Grading Policy

Discussions/Class Participation:	45 points
Creative Assignments:	45 points
Final:	10 points

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, F is substantially unsatisfactory.

Course Outline

EACH WEEK THERE WILL BE A VIEWING ASSIGNMENT as well as a CREATIVE ASSIGNMENT. The Viewing Assignment will be Discussed the Following Week. The Creative Assignment is DUE each SUNDAY at 11:59PM.

Week One

Wed. 01/08 Class Intros, Discussion of Prior Work, and Lecture: What Creates an Iconic Character and How Do Screenwriters Create Them? Finding Your Own and Why You Want to Create Them

Week Two

Wed. 01/15: Art is in the Details: Discovering What You Don't Know and How to Find It Out — Research Plans and Specificities

Week Three

Wed. 01/22: World-Building

Week Four

Wed. 01/29: Themes and Ingenuity: What Are You Trying to Say and Who Has Said It Before You? (i.e., How Do We Create Something NEW)

Week Five

Wed. 02/05: Completing the Picture: Archetypes and the Family or Five-Person Band - Significant Relationships

Week Six

Wed. 02/12: Urgency to Your Characters and to the World: Why Now?

Week Seven

Wed. 02/19: So Many Machines, but Only One Perfect One: How Do I Execute It Best?

Week Eight

Wed. 02/26: Inhabiting Your Character: Their World Views

Week Nine

Wed. 03/04: Putting It All Together: Your Characters, Your World and Your plan

Week Ten

Wed. 03/11: Pitching Tools: Bibles, Breakdowns, and Outlines

FINAL:

SCRW390 TOPICS: Character Bible and World Breakdown Completed along with Execution Plan

SCRW490 ADVANCED TOPICS: You must submit the Character Bible, World Breakdown, and Execution Plan as well as ONE of the FOLLOWING: All Web Series Episodes outlined for the first season, a Full Series Pilot or FEATURE FILM Summarized.

Assignments

You will execute a total of NINE graded creative exercises prior to completing your FINAL, all that will lead you to develop your own world of characters and a dramatic plan for them.

Please save files as a PDF, and use your last name and the name of the assignment: YourNameInterrogationScene.pdf

In-Class Discussions/Workshops

By enrolling in this course, you agree to share your ideas and writings with the professor and other students in the class. You must acquire express written consent from any writer in the class should you wish to share his/her work with someone who is not enrolled in this course. Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. We must respect each other, our collaboration, and the work at hand. Be truthful, but sensitive when giving notes. Be prepared to solve problems instead of just pointing them out.

Creative Subject Matter

As this is a creative writing course, controversial subject matter may enter into the conversation. Students have the right to express themselves artistically in their writing and address challenging issues. If you become uncomfortable with a conversation for personal reasons, you may be excused for the remainder of that class without penalty. Inclusion of individuals from the class, or direct personal attacks on members of the class will not be tolerated in course material. If you feel you are being individually targeted by material written or discussed in class, please inform the instructor as soon as possible.

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.

Laptops/Cell Phones

If your computer and the mind attached to it drift away from class, and I so much as suspect you of online activities not related to the task at hand, you will lose laptop privileges for the entire semester. Phones must be silenced and stowed.

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.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx>.

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>

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 exceptions 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>

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>

Excused Absences

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 <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/academic/Pages/absence-notification.aspx> 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.

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

Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) enabling them to access accommodations and support services to assist with their success. There are two office locations:

- Loop Campus – Lewis Center #1420 – (312) 362-8002
- Lincoln Park Campus – Student Center #370 – (773) 325-1677

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gergory Moorhead, Director of the Center, privately to discuss how he may assist in facilitating the accommodations to be used in a course. This is best done early in the term. The conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.