

## DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

School of Cinematic Arts

Writing the Feature Film Script | SCRW 302 | 2022 Winter

WED 1:30PM – 4:45PM | 14 E Jackson Room 207

First Two Weeks Remote via Zoom

In-Person resumes Jan. 18

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

Office Hours: **Please email for appointment.** WED 9AM – 1:30PM | via Zoom

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### SCWR 302 Writing the Feature Screenplay

This course focuses on completing the first draft of a feature length screenplay. Emphasis will be placed on a foundation of character, structure, plot, and theme to bring the writer's vetted concept to fruition. The lectures, in-class workshops, and aggressive page deadlines are designed to culminate in a spec screenplay that showcases voice and command of screenwriting conventions. This feature length screenplay should be revised and polished in DC 303.

Prerequisite: SCWR 301

Course Outcomes: Students will complete the first draft of a feature-length screenplay.

#### Learning Objectives:

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

- demonstrate the ability to write at a professional pace
- write visceral and visual scenes that demonstrate a clear and unique voice
- create three-dimensional characters with unique voices and clear motivations
- apply established narrative techniques to scenes, sequences, and acts
- evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

#### Required Textbooks:

- Screenwriting: The Sequence Approach by Paul Gulino, ISBN 13: 9780826415684
- Produced feature screenplays in PDF format

### 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 login 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, we will have weekly opportunities for feedback and support in a number of ways: reading outside of class and discussing online or in small groups during class, and/or writer's room "talk throughs" or table-reading during class in larger groups.*

Week 1, the class will be divided into reading / support groups to help create a mini-cohort within our class that will get you through the drafting process. **\*NOTE: You are responsible for reading / supporting your group each of your group's weekly writing assignments before every class session, unless otherwise noted.**

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week One

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Mapping the First Draft (Pitch & Outline/Treatment)

**ASSIGNMENT ONE:** Progress Check – Page 10 *due in D2L Week 2*

### Week Two

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Structure, Sequencing, Screenplay Format

**ASSIGNMENT TWO:** Progress Check – Page 20 *due in D2L Week 3*

### Week Three

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Nailing the Set Up (Act 1A, Act 1B Review)

**ASSIGNMENT THREE:** Progress Check – Page 30 – Act 1 done *due in D2L Week 4*

### Week Four

WORKSHOP: Story Meetings Act 1

**ASSIGNMENT FOUR:** Progress Check – Page 40 *due in D2L Week 5*

### Week Five

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Character Arc of Transformation: Goals and Stakes

**ASSIGNMENT FIVE:** Progress Check – Page 50 *due in D2L Week 6*

### Week Six

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Story Meetings Act 2, Part 1

**ASSIGNMENT FIVE:** Progress Check – Page 60 Act 2, Part 1 done *due in D2L Week 7*

### Week Seven

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Cinematic Storytelling: Visual, Visceral Action Description

**ASSIGNMENT SEVEN:** Progress Check – Page 70 *due in D2L Week 8*

### Week Eight

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Story Meetings Act 2, Part 2

**ASSIGNMENT EIGHT:** Progress Check – Page 80 *due in D2L Week 9*

### Week Nine

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Dialogue: Subtext and Voice

**ASSIGNMENT NINE:** Progress Check – Page 90 *due in D2L Week 10*

### Week Ten

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Story Meetings Act 3

**ASSIGNMENT TEN: COMPLETE FIRST DRAFT due Final Exam Week Wed March 16 by 1:30PM (30%)**

## 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. In order to participate in group feedback, you need to be present in class and/or post feedback as relevant when opportunities arise for online forum feedback.

## Assignments

To complete this script in 10 weeks, you will be put on a professional writing pace of 10 pages / week. **Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9** will be turned in at the start of class each week, and selectively reviewed in class for feedback based on your readiness. Keeping up with this pace by completing the weekly page target / progress check assignments is **45% of your grade**, or 5% for each of the 9 progress-check assignments. You get full credit if you hit the page count, and turn it in to D2L on time. **Assignment 10**, your first completed draft, is worth **45% of your grade**. You can find the rubric for how that will be graded below.

### ASSIGNMENT 10 – FIRST COMPLETE DRAFT

Tips to keep in mind, as this assignment is 45% of your final grade:

- 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.

You will be asked to complete a self-assessment on your first draft, setting goals for yourself and analyzing whether you achieved those goals. This will factor into your evaluation of final work.

## RUBRIC

0: does not meet objective 1: somewhat meets objective 2: meets objective (3: exceeds objective)

You will receive a score of 0-3 in each of the following categories:

- Follows proper screenplay format; proofread for grammar, spelling and typos
- Clear act breaks in the story structure
- Cause and Effect is clear in the scene order
- Develops dimensional characters with clear motivations, arc of transformation
- Visceral and visual scenes that demonstrate a clear and unique voice

## Grading

Attendance/Participation 10%

Progress Checks 45%

First Complete Draft 45%

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.*

## Attendance | COVID Precautions

Attendance and participation are mandatory. An absence, which is defined as not showing up for class or arriving more than 10 minutes late to class, can have an impact on your participation grade.

**HOWEVER**, due to the uncertain nature of the pandemic and our need to take every health precaution, ***please do not come to class if you feel under the weather or have any COVID symptoms.*** As such, there will be ample opportunity to attend async, online workshops or make up class participation in an async/online format as needed to facilitate our collective, safe, in-person interactions.

### **Participation**

You may be called upon to discuss various topics storytelling, screenwriting, and evaluation of peer coursework during class and in async, online discussions and written feedback.

### **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 their work with someone who is not enrolled in this course. Feedback is an essential part of the writing process, and essential to this coursework in preparing our written work for public review. When you offer feedback, please be sure to adhere to the following workshop guidelines. 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.

### **Workshop Feedback Guidelines**

- First and foremost, a workshop is about the piece of writing, not the writer. Both the writer and those critiquing the piece need to keep in mind that the goal is to make the writing the best it possibly can be.
- Workshops are never destructive. They are constructive. Writing is never “bad.” The writing is addressed so that it can get stronger.
- Always start with something that is working in the piece.
- Then go on to the aspects that are not yet fully developed or that are not quite working yet.
- The writer must stay quiet during the workshoping of her or his piece.
- If the majority of the readers agree on a particular element of the piece that is working or not working, listen. If the readers are completely divided, it simply may just be a matter of opinion.
- The writer should always listen, but ultimately must trust their gut. The writer’s name will be on the page when all is said and done.
- All people must have time to participate for each writer. No single person should dominate the conversation.
- The writer may speak and ask questions at the end of the workshop.

### **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 that you are being individually targeted by material written or discussed in class, please inform the instructor as soon as possible.

### **COVID-19 Health and Safety Precautions**

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul’s Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

### **Attitude and Civil Discourse**

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.

### **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 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 work 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 at <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 on [my.cdm.depaul.edu/](http://my.cdm.depaul.edu/).

- 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

Fax: (773)325.3720

TTY: (773)325.7296

<http://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.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>

## **RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS**

1. How to use Bluestar to Make Appointments: <https://offices.depaul.edu/depaul-central/student-resources/Pages/BlueStar.aspx>
2. CDM Academic Advising: <https://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Student-Resources/Pages/MeetOurStaff.aspx>
3. University Academic Advising: <https://resources.depaul.edu/student-success/advising/Pages/default.aspx>
4. CDM SCA Tech Support Email: [scaavsupport@depaul.edu](mailto:scaavsupport@depaul.edu)
5. University Tech Support: <https://offices.depaul.edu/information-services/support/Pages/default.aspx>
6. Dean of Students Office: <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/dos.aspx>
7. Incomplete Request: <https://www.cdm.depaul.edu/Student-Resources/Pages/Grading-Policies.aspx>
8. Tutoring and Study Help: <https://resources.depaul.edu/student-success/tutoring/Pages/default.aspx>
9. University Counseling Services: <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/ucs.aspx>
10. University Financial Aid Office: <https://www.depaul.edu/admission-and-aid/financial-aid/Pages/contact-us.aspx>
11. University Student Success Resources: <https://resources.depaul.edu/student-success/Pages/default.aspx>
12. The Vincentian Assistance Fund: <https://offices.depaul.edu/mission-ministry/scholarships-grants-awards/Pages/Vincentian-Assistance-Fund.aspx>

## Academic and Technical Student Resources

### Succeeding as an Online Student

[A collection of crowdsourced tips](#) from DePaul students, faculty, and staff include information on finding computer and internet access, staying organized, communicating with instructors, participating effectively in group work, and creating a productive work environment.

### D2L Tutorials

For help navigating and use D2L, visit the [student tutorials and guides to using D2L](#). The tutorials and guides provide instructions for doing things such as starting a thread in a Discussion and submitting to a Submission folder.

### Students with Disabilities

Students seeking disability-related accommodations are required to register with DePaul's [Center for Students with Disabilities](#) (CSD), enabling you to access accommodations and support services to assist in your success. You can inquire via email at [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu) or via phone: +1 (312) 362-8002 or +1 (773) 325-1677.

Students are also invited to contact me privately to discuss your needs and how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will require during this course. This is best done early in the term and our conversation will remain confidential.

For information on accessibility issues related to D2L, visit the [accessibility section of the D2L website](#).

### Additional Accommodations

This course may include instructional content delivered via audio and video. If you have any concerns about your ability to access and/or understand this material in its default format, please notify me within the first week of the course so accommodations can be made.

### Technology Support

For technical support by email, email [helpdesk@depaul.edu](mailto:helpdesk@depaul.edu). To submit an online ticket, [visit the DePaul service portal](#). For technical support by phone, call DePaul's Help Desk at +1 (312) 362-8765. The Help Desk operates on Central Standard Time and its hours are as follows:

Monday – Thursday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Friday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday: Closed

The Help Desk is closed during all University holidays.

For DePaul software information, visit the [Student Success Technology guide](#).

### [DePaul Writing Center](#)

Writing Center tutors can meet with you online. Writing Center Tutors work with writers on many different projects across disciplines. In each appointment, Writing Center tutors will work with you to collaboratively set an agenda focused on one, two, or three specific topics for revision.

### [DePaul Library](#)



You can use [Ask a Librarian](#) to discuss questions with a librarian via instant messaging. The library also provides [Research Guides](#) for any field in which you need to conduct research.

### Counseling Services

[University Counseling Services](#) are operating on a virtual basis and counselors are available for support, crisis management, consultation and community referrals.

If you would like to be contacted by a counselor please leave a message with University Counseling Services: +1 (773) 325-7779. Their front desk staff are working remotely and will answer your call directly. If they are taking another call, leave a message and your call will be returned within a business day.

In case of an urgent or life-threatening emergency, please call Public Safety +1 (773) 325-7777, 911, or Advocate Illinois Masonic Behavioral Health Services Crisis Line (if you are in Chicago).

### Office for Academic Advising Support

The [Office for Academic Advising Support](#) (OAAS) is open for online advising appointments.

Any student who is undeclared or thinking about changing or adding a major or minor is welcome to meet with an OAAS advisor via Zoom to discuss your options and interests. Please email [AdvisingSupport@depaul.edu](mailto:AdvisingSupport@depaul.edu) for assistance scheduling an appointment or with any other advising question.

### Career Center

The [DePaul Career Center](#) offers a range of career services, available virtually, including personal career advising, career-skills workshops, mentoring, networking, and job and internship opportunities.

### Dean of Students

The [Dean of Students Office](#) provides many services to help students adjust to college. They also have resources for students who experience difficult situations, such as illnesses or family issues, and they offer support options for a variety of circumstances.

The Dean of Students Office is accessible for live questions, referrals and assistance via [a virtual office using Zoom](#). The virtual office will be staffed Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (CST). You can also request an appointment by calling 773-325-7290 or by emailing [deanofstudents@depaul.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@depaul.edu). In cases of emergency, please call the Department of Public Safety at 773-325-7777.

### DePaul student support links from Associate Dean Lucia Dettori:

- Center for Students with Disability: <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx>
- Center for Students with Disability Main Contact Greg Moorehead: [gmoorehe@depaul.edu](mailto:gmoorehe@depaul.edu)
- Dean of Students Office: <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/dos.aspx>
- Students in crisis services: <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/Pages/emergency-protocols.aspx>

### DePaul Central

[DePaul Central](#) provides services to help student manage registration, academic planning, financial aid, and payment processes.



Use their services by calling +1 (312) 362-8610, emailing [finaid1@depaul.edu](mailto:finaid1@depaul.edu) or [dpcl@depaul.edu](mailto:dpcl@depaul.edu), or by joining the DePaul Central Zoom Lobby for assistance from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. (CST) (10 a.m. - 12 p.m. on Wednesdays).

[Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday Zoom Lobby](#)  
[Wednesday Zoom Lobby](#)

Please also see DePaul Central's [step-by-step instructions](#) on how to use [Campus Connect](#).

## Policies

- [Academic Integrity](#)
- [Academic Calendar with Add/Drop Dates](#)
- [Undergraduate Student Handbook](#)
- [Graduate Student Handbook](#)

## D2L Student Settings

This page contains instructions for customizing and managing notifications in D2L, and adding a profile picture to D2L.

### [Get Course Notifications](#)

Notifications from D2L can help you to stay connected to your courses and on track with course work. You have a few options for receiving and managing notifications in D2L. You should select the option for receiving and managing notifications that will work best for you.

### [Get Course Notifications via the Pulse App](#)

The Pulse app provides an easy view of course calendars, readings, assignments, grades, and announcements. The Pulse app will also allow you to receive push notifications from your courses. The Pulse app sends push notifications for all types of D2L activity; for example, a push notifications is sent when a News item is published, a new grade is updated, a new item in Content is published, and feedback is published via a Submission folder.

### *[Instructions for Downloading and Using the Pulse App](#)*

1. In the top right of D2L, select your name to open the menu.
2. **Select Notifications.**
3. Select **App Store**, if you have an iOS device, or **Google Play**, if you have an Android device.
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to install the app on your device.
5. On your device, open the Pulse app.
6. Search for and select **DePaul University** as your institution.
7. Log in with your Campus Connect user ID and password. You will see a list of your classes.

### [Get Course Notifications via Email](#)

When subscribing to notifications via email, you select the notifications that you receive. Instant notifications are the recommended type of notifications, and you can further determine the items you would like to be notified of via email.

### *[Instructions for Subscribing to Instant Notifications via Email](#)*

1. In the top right of D2L, select your name to open the menu.
2. **Select Notifications.**
3. Navigate to the "Instant Notifications" section.
4. In the "Email" column, select the items you would like to trigger notifications via email. (If a box is already selected, then you are already subscribed to that type of instant notification.)
5. Select **Save**.

## Add a Profile Picture

Adding a profile picture can enable a greater sense of community among course participants. When you add a profile picture, it will appear next to your name in the Classlist and in Discussions.

### *Instructions for Adding a Profile Picture to D2L*

1. In the top right of the course homepage, select your name to open the menu.
2. Select **Profile**.
3. The user profile page will open. Select **Change Picture**.
4. A pop-up box will appear. Select **My Computer**.
5. Select **Upload**.
6. Select the image from your computer.
7. Select **Choose**.
8. The image name should be displayed. Select **Add**.