

DePaul University School of Cinematic Arts

SCWR 502 / 552: Writing for Thesis II

Winter 2022

Tuesday 5:45 – 9:00PM, 14 East Jackson, #209 and Zoom

Professor Scott Myers (he/him/his)

smyers15@depaul.edu

312-362-1120

Office Hours: TUE 1:00-4:00PM Central via Zoom by appointment

Description

Students revise and polish the first draft of their thesis screenplay. This script is to serve as the culminating piece in the MFA writing portfolio and must be approved by a vote of the thesis committee for degree conferral.

Prerequisites

SCWR 501 or SCWR 551 is a prerequisite for this class.

Course Outcomes

Students will complete a rewrite plan, then a revised and polished draft of their thesis project to be delivered to their committee by the end of finals week.

Objectives

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

- organize script feedback
- develop a detailed plan for a comprehensive rewrite
- rewrite a project at a professional pace
- employ multiple focused rewrite passes on a project
- evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

Course Management

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**, where both the online and in-class sections are linked together. There students will find announcements, assignments, and additional reading materials.

The class will be divided into two groups (A, B). Beginning with Week 4, each group will be responsible for rewriting and uploading the equivalent of 2 sequences (20-30 pages) for in-class group discussion. Writers working on TV pilot scripts will need to present 1-2 rewritten acts (15-25 pages) per workshop session. TV writers will also be responsible for creating a Series Bible.

Weekly writing assignments are due by **Midnight Sunday**. Upload to the appropriate Submissions forum on the D2L site.

All written assignments must be typed with pages numbered. Title page:

Your Name

Course Number

Date

Writing Assignment: [Name of assignment]

Format: PDF.

Screenwriting software: Fade In, Final Draft, or Movie Magic Screenwriter.

MAKE SURE YOU PROOFREAD, SPELLCHECK, AND GRAMMAR-CHECK YOUR PAGES BEFORE UPLOADING YOUR WRITING ASSIGNMENT.

Attendance

Absent students forfeit their assignment grade for the first two unexcused absences. **Three unexcused absences will constitute course failure.**

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 is here](#). Students must submit supporting documentation alongside the form. The professor reserves the sole right to offer an excused absence and/or accommodations for an excused absence.

Grading

25%: Writing Assignments. Students will receive maximum credit by uploading their assignments by the due date and time. Assignments will be docked 1 point for every half-day they are late beyond the due date.

25%: Class Participation. Participation is absolutely crucial. I expect you to read the material, contribute great notes, and maintain a positive, supportive attitude in the room. For reference, re-read “Reflections on Constructive Critique” available on the D2L site.

25%: Rewrite Plan. A complete, thorough Rewrite Plan is due by class time on **Tuesday, February 1st**.

25%: Final Revised Draft. Students will receive maximum credit for submitting their Final Revised Draft by the due date and time: **Friday, March 18 at 5:00PM**. Creative quality will be taken into account on the Final Revised Draft per the SCA Screenwriting Grading Rubric which is available for download on the D2L site.

These values are minimums for each grade:

A	= 93-100	B-	= 80-83
A-	= 90-92	C+	= 77-79
B+	= 87-89	C	= 74-76
B	= 84-86	C-	= 70-73

C- is the minimum passing grade.

A indicates excellence, B indicates good work, C indicates satisfactory work, D work is unsatisfactory in some respect, F is substantially unsatisfactory work.

Thesis Timeline

- Final Thesis Scripts are due to committee members on **March 25th by 5PM**.
- We will hold defense meetings with you individually on **April 22nd between 12-5PM**.
- If you pass, you need to complete and pass your coursework to graduate in June.
- If it is determined that you need a rewrite, you will have until **May 27th by 5PM** to deliver that rewrite. If the project passes, you will be eligible to graduate in June.
- If the project still does not pass, you will be enrolled in a non-credit, zero-tuition Summer I thesis continuation course. This rewrite will be due by **5PM July 15th**.
- If you pass, you will be awarded a summer graduation. If it still does not pass, you may seek to have your credits transferred into an MS degree in Cinema.

Schedule

WEEK 1 (January 4): Discuss revision process; Thesis committee feedback review; Select Groups A and B; Set one-on-one meetings.

Writing Assignment: Rewrite Plan: Part 1 (Assessment)

WEEK 2 (January 11): Discuss each student's preliminary Rewrite Plan: Part 1 (Assessment).

Writing Assignment: Rewrite Plan: Part 2 (Revision Outline)

Reading Assignment: *Follow* (2021 Black List script)

WEEK 3 (January 18): Discuss each student's preliminary Rewrite Plan: Part 2 (Revision Outline).

Writing Assignment: Group A -- Feature Script (Act 1 / Sequences 1-2); 1-Hour Drama (Tease, Acts 1-2); 1/2-Hour (Tease, Act 1)

Reading Assignment: *In the End* (2021 Black List script)

WEEK 4 (January 25): Review Group A revised pages.

Writing Assignment: Group B -- Feature Script (Act 1 / Sequences 1-2); 1-Hour Drama (Tease, Acts 1-2); ½-Hour (Tease, Act 1)

Reading Assignment: *An Ideal Woman* (2021 Black List script / 2021 Nicholl script)

WEEK 5 (February 1): Review Group B revised pages.

Writing Assignment: Group A -- Feature Script (Act 2A / Sequences 3-4); 1-Hour Drama (Acts 3, 4, 5); 1/2-Hour (Acts 2-3, Tag).

Reading Assignment: *Lift* (2021 Black List script)

NOTE: Final Rewrite Plan comprised of your Assessment Pages and Revision Outline is due by today's class session.

WEEK 6 (February 8): Review Group A revised pages.

Writing Assignment: Group B -- Feature Script (Act 2A / Sequences 3-4); 1-Hour Drama (Acts 3, 4, 5); 1/2-Hour (Acts 2-3, Tag).

Reading Assignment: *Whittier* (2021 Black List script)

WEEK 7 (February 15): Review Group B revised pages.

Writing Assignment: Group A -- Feature Script, Act Two, Part B; Groups A and B TV Writers, Scene Work.

Reading Assignment: *Cruel Summer* (2021 Black List script)

WEEK 8 (February 22): Review Group A (Feature) and Groups A and B (TV) revised pages.

Writing Assignment: Group B -- Feature Script, Act Two, Part B; Groups A and B TV Writers, Dialogue Pass.

Reading Assignment: *Mr. Benihana* (2021 Black List script)

WEEK 9 (March 1): Review Group B (Feature) and Groups A and B (TV) revised pages.

Writing Assignment: Groups A + B-- Feature Writers, Act Three; TV Writers, Polish.

Reading Assignment: *The College Dropout* (2021 Black List script)

WEEK 10 (March 8): Review Group A and B's revised pages.

Writing Assignment: Final revised script.

The final revised thesis scripts are due to be sent to committee members by Friday, March 25th at 5:00PM. Make sure to cc: me.

NOTE: Do a thorough grammar check, spell check, and final edit of your script. Consider this a professional submission. Every little detail counts.

Procedures

Classes will include a workshop session followed by a lecture. Students will be divided into two groups to maximize attention on the greatest amount of material possible. **It is vitally important all students submit work on time, and that all students pre-read the material thoroughly before class to offer detailed notes.**

Work must be submitted to D2L by **midnight on Sunday**. We need two days of reading time. If it is not delivered on time, it cannot be adequately critiqued.

Office Hours

TUE 1:00-4:00PM via Zoom. By appointment only.

In addition, we will schedule a **one on one meeting** with each student during the first two weeks of the quarter to discuss their story and Rewrite Plan.

In-Class 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. 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 should expect to read, hear, and participate in discussions about some stories which include varied subject matter including sex, drugs, alcohol, violence, politics, religion, and so forth. 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.

Zoom Policies

The DePaul [Code of Student Responsibility](#) applies to online behavior as well as in-person or classroom behavior. The following are policies course meetings on Zoom:

- General – Sign in with your preferred first name, last name, and pronoun preferences (if you so choose). If you do not have access to a computer or smartphone with internet access, call into class. This is not optimal, so try to locate an internet-enabled device to use for this course. Please stay engaged in class activities. Close any apps on your device that are not relevant and turn off notifications.
- Video – Turn on your video whenever possible. It is helpful to be able to see each other, just as in an in-person class. You may elect to turn off your video if you have limited internet bandwidth, no webcam, or if you're unable to find an environment without a lot of visual distractions.
- Audio – Mute your microphone when you are not talking. Be in a quiet place when possible and turn off any music, videos, etc. in the background.

Laptops/Cell Phones

I will trust that on your honor as a DePaul University student and as a creative individual who aspires to learn the writing craft, you will not stray into any form of social media during class – except for classroom breaks. Phones must be silenced and stowed unless needed for course work.

COVID Social Distance and Mask Policy

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty, and staff are expected to (1) wear a cloth face covering at all times while on campus, both inside buildings and outside on the grounds; (2) maintain physical distance (at least six feet) in all DePaul spaces (including classrooms, meeting rooms, hallways, rest rooms, offices, and outdoor spaces); (3) conduct a daily self-screening process for the symptoms of COVID-19 using the #CampusClear app before coming to campus; (4) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (5) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Order. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who have a medical reason for not complying should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).

Food and Drink

Eating and drinking in class are not allowed at this time. Students needing accommodation should contact the [Center for Students with Disabilities](#). Faculty needing accommodation should contact [Human Resources](#). We will take at least two breaks in class to allow for fresh air, hydration, and eating.

Academic Support Resources

A complete listing of student support resources can be found under Content on the class D2L page.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/>. If you have any questions be sure to consult with the professor. Plagiarism will earn you an immediate F in this course.

Alterations

The professor reserves the right to alter the syllabus at any time. Students will be apprised of any and all changes with clear instructions should they occur.

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.

Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from the course do so by using the [Campus Connection](#) system. 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.

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 exceptional 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: csd@depaul.edu.

Lewis Center 1420,
25 East Jackson Blvd.
Phone number: (312)362-8002
TTY: (773)325.7296

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. Students complete the evaluation online in [CampusConnect](#) or via a mobile device in class during the Week 9 session.