SCWR 400 FOUNDATIONS OF SCREENWRITING

Fall 2022 | Wednesday 5:45-9:00pm | 14 E. Jackson, LL107

Instructor: Wendy Roderweiss Office: CDM 513
Email: wroderwe@depaul.edu (please allow 24 hours for a response)
Office Hours: W 5:00-5:30 (on zoom, sign up on bluestar for an appt.) W 9:00-10:00pm in the classroom
Type of Instruction: Lecture/discussion/workshop
Course Management system: D2L
Drop dates and deadlines: https://academics.depaul.edu/calendar/Pages/default.aspx
This syllabus is subject to change (Document date 9/1/22)

Course Description:
Students begin their screenwriting journey with a strong foundation in the basic building blocks of solid, engaging storytelling. Students will mine their own lives in order to create memorable stories, characters, and settings. Films and other creative works analyzed in this class will reflect creators and stories from underrepresented groups, highlighting a wide range of diverse backgrounds and intersectional identities. Additionally, students will learn basic screenwriting skills such as character development, constructing atmosphere, and the fundamental components of a scene.
PREREQUISITE(S): None

Course Outcomes:
In addition to completing several writing assignments, students are expected to develop, outline, and write a short screenplay.

Learning Outcomes
- employ standard screenplay format
- identify elements of scene craft, character development, and narrative structure
- identify how diverse backgrounds and perspectives uniquely affect story and character development across multiple genres
- demonstrate expanded visual writing skills
- apply a work-flow process to their creative writing
- produce original writing projects on a deadline
- assess their own work and that of their peers

Texts and Films:
Required:
- Tools of Screenwriting by David Howard and Edward Mabley   ISBN-10: 0312119089
- The Hollywood Standard by Christopher Riley (3rd edition)   ISBN-10: 1615933220

Additional essays may be provided by the instructor.
Some short films will be screened in class, but students may be required to view additional films outside of class.

<u>Required Software:</u>
You will be required to use screenwriting software throughout the course. A word processing program is not acceptable.

Final Draft is strongly recommended for those with a focus on screenwriting, producing and/or directing – The software is $99 at:
https://store.finaldraft.com/final-draft-12-edu.html

An alternative (and cheaper) option is Fade In which is $50 for students:
https://www.fadeinpro.com/page.pl?content=students

Also: Writer Duet, which is wonderful for online collaboration: https://www.writerduet.com/
They are monthly based program and also have student pricing if you contact them.

A couple of free options, though not ideal are Celtx: https://www.celtx.com/index.html
And I have not used it but have heard good things about Highland:
https://highland2.app/screenwriters.php

<u>Submission format</u>
Assignments should be submitted as PDF files only to the appropriate submissions folders on D2L. Files should be saved as <u>YourName_ScriptTitle.pdf</u>

<u>D2L:</u>
We will be using D2L for this course. To log on, go to https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/home
Enter your campus connect login and password. Once you are logged in, click on the course link and you will find links to the syllabus, course outline, submission folders, discussion forums and weekly assignments.

<u>Grading</u>
20%   Attendance and Participation (participation includes discussions, workshops, Morning Pages/Spark Journals)
20%   Creative Assignments
5%   Loglines
10%   Step Outline of Short
15%   First Draft
15%   Second Draft
15%   Final Draft and Refined Pitch and Logline

<u>Grading Scale</u>
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
F=62-0

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

Assignments and Exercises – Class Work Assignments must be handed in on time. I will not accept late work. Do not use class time to finalize your projects.

Special Accommodations: If you have any special considerations please see me.

Critiques: Due to limited class time, not everyone's work will get a full review during class. If you'd like more feedback, arrange to discuss your work with me during my office hours.

Content Changes – Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require slight alteration or rescheduling. I will contact you via email with any deviations from the syllabus. Please ensure that mail sent to the email address that you provided to the school is readily accessible.

SCREENS
The use of screens; phones, laptops, tablets etc, are not allowed in class.

SCHEDULE

Class 1 9/7
Please get "The Hollywood Standard" as soon as possible.

IN CLASS: Introduction to the course and syllabus
           Storytelling Basics
           Intro to Visual Storytelling
           Screenplay Formatting

ASSIGNMENTS:
Read: Tools of Screenwriting, pages xi-29; 43 through 54; 63 through 76; 78 through 83
           Giving and Receiving notes
Watch: *Next Floor* (Short) dir. Denis Villeneuve
           The Crush (Short) dir. Michael Creagh, *Content Labels: Mild Violence*
 Write: Creative Assignment: Preparation for a Date
           Discussion Forum Posts
           Spark Journal Pages (including prompt 1)

Class 2 9/14
IN CLASS: Conflict
           The Subject
           Character and Premise
           First Workshop: Creative Assignment: Preparation for a Date

ASSIGNMENTS:
Read: Tools of Screenwriting, pages 30 through 39; 60 through 62; 84 through 90
Watch: *New Boy* (Short) dir. Steph Green, *Content Labels: Violence*
           Creating Outside your Demographic workshop (link in d2l)
Write: Creative Assignment II: Roommates
           Discussion Forum Posts
           Spark Journal Pages (including prompt 2)

Class 3 9/21
IN CLASS: Character Intros

Visual Storytelling
Dialogue and Exposition
Loglines
Final Project guidelines
Introduce presentations
Second Workshop: Creative Assignment II: Roommates
Film Clip: *Sixth Sense* dir. M. Night Shyamalan
Film Clip: *Aliens* dir. James Cameron *Content Label : Violence*
Film Clip : *Days of Heaven* dir. Terrence Malick
Film Clip: *Out of the Past* dir. Jacques Tourneur

ASSIGNMENTS:
Watch: *Enough Said* (Feature) dir. Nicole Holofcener, *Content Label: Body shaming*
Write: Creative Assignment III: Interrogation
            Discussion Forum Posts (Detailed as we will not be workshopping next week)
            Spark Journal Pages (including prompt 3)
Read: Character Breakdown articles on d2l

Class 4 9/28
IN CLASS: Three act structure (features and shorts)
            Plot points
            Two Incidents
            Climax

ASSIGNMENTS:
Choose: Group 1 chooses script for presentation
Read: Tools of Screenwriting, pages 91 through 94
Write: THREE LOGLINES for potential short films
            Creative Assignment IV: Seduction Scene
            Feedback on group's loglines
            Discussion Forum Posts
            Spark Journal Pages (including prompt 4)

Class 5 10/5
IN CLASS: Step Outlines
            Endings and Beginnings
            Open Endings
            Fourth Workshop: Creative Assignment IV: Seduction Scene
            Group 1 announces chosen script
            Short film*: J'attendrai le suivant (I'll Wait for the Next One)* dir. Philippe Orriendy
            Short film: *Spider* dir. Nash Edgerton, *Content labels: Violence*

ASSIGNMENTS:
Read: Tools of Screenwriting, pages 76 through 78; 55 through 59
            The Elevator Pitch Part 1 and 2 on D2L
            Script chosen by group 1
Watch: *Inja* (short film) dir. Steve Pasvolsky *Content Labels: abuse, racism*

Write: STEP OUTLINES for short films
                Discussion Forum Posts
                Spark Journal Pages (Including Prompt 5)
                Start working on your 30-60 second pitch paragraph

Class 6 10/12
IN CLASS: Scenes
                Fifth Workshop: STEP OUTLINES for short films
                Presentation Group 1
                Group 2 announces chosen script
                Scene from *Wonderboys* dir. Curtis Hanson
                Scene from *Being Human*
                Scene from *Sugar* dir. Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck

ASSIGNMENTS:
Sign up for individual meeting with me for next week
Read: Script chosen by group 2
Write: First Draft/Revision of Outline/Character Development- will be decided by professor
                Spark Journal Pages (Including Prompt 6)

Class 7 10/19
IN CLASS: INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH ME on Zoom (do not come to class)

ASSIGNMENTS:
Write First Drafts

Class 8 10/26
IN CLASS: Presentation Group 2
                Group 3 announces chosen script
                Sixth Workshop: FIRST SET of Scripts (Half of Class)
                3 act structure review
                Short film: *The Lunch Date* dir. Adam Davidson *Content Label: racism*
                Short film : *Stryka* dir. Emily Carmichael

ASSIGNMENTS:
Read: Script chosen by Group 3
                Tools of Screenwriting, pages 95 through 97. Short Scripts.
Write: Revise scripts

Class 9 11/2
IN CLASS: Presentation Group 3
                Group 4 announces chosen script
                Seventh Workshop: SECOND SET of Scripts (Other Half of Class)

ASSIGNMENTS:
Read: Script chosen by Group 4
Write: ALL SECOND DRAFTS DUE
                Elevator Pitches

Class 10 11/9
IN CLASS: Presentation Group 4
               Eighth Workshop: ALL SECOND DRAFTS, Pitch your project to the class

ASSIGNMENTS:
Write: Final Drafts of Short Films and Elevator Pitches Due by Wednesday, November 16th
               at 5:45pm

Assignment Details and Expectations

Late assignments will not be accepted without the prior consent of the instructor and may result in a reduction in the student's grade.

Creative Assignments (20% of final grade)
These exercises will be based on the screenwriting conventions we cover in class. Specific guidelines for each exercise will be provided after the lectures and will be critiqued in class the following week. You are expected to bring a copy of the assignment to class for workshop and submit a copy to the corresponding Submissions link on D2L. Each assignment is 5% of your final grade (20% in total).

Loglines for Short Script (5% of final grade)
Develop three premise ideas for your short film. You will eventually develop one of these ideas into a short screenplay. Each premise should include character (protagonist), conflict (what is the central conflict of the narrative?) and a sense of resolution. Be mindful of the aim and limitations of the short film medium. Please bring a copy of the assignment to class for workshop and submit a copy to the corresponding Submissions link on D2L.

Outline of Short Script (10%)
Taking your chosen idea, please develop a scene-by-scene outline for your short film. Use your plot points! Be ready to pitch the document in class. Please bring a copy of the assignment to class for workshop and submit a copy to the corresponding Submissions link on D2L.

Short Script Draft I (15% of final grade)
A few things to keep in mind as you write your scripts:

• 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.

• Use your plot points as a guide.

- Avoid exposition heavy dialogue - Always ask yourself, "Is there a way I can communicate this information visually?"

- Your script must be at least 6 pages (not including title page), but should not exceed 10 pages.

- 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.

Please bring a copy of the assignment to class for workshop and submit a copy to the corresponding Submissions link on D2L.

Rewrite(s) of Short Script (15% of final grade each, the final draft includes a Pitch)

A few things to keep in mind as you REWRITE your scripts:

- The rewrite of your script be a marked improvement over your first draft.

- You must include a cover page.

- Use notes you received from the instructor, workshops and self-evaluation in order to craft your revised draft.

- Characters, dialogue, structure and scene work should be completely reevaluated and enhanced.

- Spelling, grammar and punctuation count - Proofread your work, proofread it again and then proofread it one more time just to be sure.

- Standard screenwriting formatting is required. Refer to the textbook for this class, the scripts we read in class, and your instructor for assistance.

- Your script must be at least 6 pages (not including the title page), but should not exceed 10 pages.

Workshops, Attendance, and Participation (20% of your final grade):

<u>Attendance</u>
Classes will consist of lecture, screenings, discussion, and creative exercises. Attendance is mandatory. An absence is defined as not showing up for class, or arriving more than 15 minutes late, or missing any 15-minute period during class time. I take attendance every class. If you arrive less than 15 minutes late, and do not hear your name called, make sure you let me know you are present so I do not mark you absent. Any absences will result in a reduction of the attendance/participation grade. **Anyone who misses 3 classes will automatically drop a letter grade. Anyone who misses 4 classes will automatically fail.** However, if you are legitimately sick, please stay home. BUT you must email me at wroder@cdm.depaul.edu *before class* if you are going to miss. If you miss without contacting me it will adversely affect your grade and standing in the course.

<u>Participation</u>
You may be called upon to discuss various topics on screenwriting and storytelling during class and discussions may develop throughout the course online, with which you are required to participate. Please be prepared having read the texts and screened the assigned films. Also, spark journals and morning pages will be discussed in class, but never read.

Workshops

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, you will be participating in weekly small group workshop sessions that will enable you to showcase your assignments and the first draft of your short screenplay. Please be sure to adhere to the following workshop guidelines.

Workshop 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.

• We will always start with something that is working in the piece.

• Then we will go to the aspects that are not yet fully developed or that are not quite working yet.

• The writer must stay quiet during the workshopping 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.

COURSE POLICIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Covid 19 Health and Safety Precautions: Starting April 11, 2022 masks will no longer be required in classrooms and labs, but are still encouraged and recommended. If you need one, masks are available at a limited number of first-floor desk areas near building entrances.

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.

Preferred Name and 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

Respect for Diversity and Inclusion: At DePaul, our mission calls us to explore "what must be done" in order to respect the inherent dignity and identity of each human person. We value diversity because it is part of our history, our traditions, and our future. We see diversity as an asset and a strength that adds to the richness of classroom learning. In my course, I strive to include diverse authors, perspectives and teaching pedagogies. I also encourage open dialogue and spaces for students to express their unique identities and perspectives. I am open to having difficult conversations and I will strive to create an inclusive classroom that values all perspectives. If at any time the classroom experience does not live up to this expectation, please feel free to contact me via email or during office hours.

Content Labels: The films, lectures, and discussion in this course may engage deeply with potentially sensitive or traumatizing material, such as: violence**,** sexual assault/rape**,** sexism**,** racism**,** police brutality**,** transphobia**,** homophobia**,** abuse**,** suicide**,** blood**,** and body-shaming. I will note especially graphic/intense content and will do my best to foster a classroom in which we can relate courageously, compassionately, and contemplatively with difficult and important content each week.

If you would like more specific or personalized content labels identified throughout the course (especially ones that are not named above), please e-mail and I will do my level best to flag them. I am also happy to discuss alternatives to the required viewing if necessary.

In that spirit, I ask that you include content labels if they apply to your written work submitted on D2L, and then again before we read aloud or discuss that work in class.

As instructors, we might sometimes fail to flag content that a student identifies as harmful. No matter the reason, understand that I feel that the best response to such a failure is to apologize sincerely, ask for clarification (if needed), and make necessary adjustments to future courses. We can't know everything that is going to impact every student in our classes, but we can respond with humility and compassion when our students let us know how to be better.

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.

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. 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: DePaul University is a learning community that fosters the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas within a context that emphasizes a sense of responsibility for oneself, for others and for society at large. Violations of academic integrity, in any of their forms, are, therefore, detrimental to the values of DePaul, to the students' own development as responsible members of society, and to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Violations include but are not limited to the following categories: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification or sabotage of research data; destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct. Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by other university officials and possible civil or criminal prosecution. Please refer to your Student Handbook or visit Academic Integrity at DePaul University (http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu) for further details.

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

Copyright Statement: The materials provided by the instructor in this course are for the use of the students enrolled in the course. Copyrighted course materials may not be further disseminated.

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 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

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 your success. There are two office locations:

Loop Campus - Lewis Center #1420 - (312) 362-8002

Lincoln Park Campus - Student Center #370 - (773) 325-1677

Students can also email the office at csd@depaul.edu

Students who are registered with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact me privately to discuss how I may assist in facilitating the accommodations you will use in this course. This is best done early in the term. Our conversation will remain confidential to the extent possible.

Writing Center: I strongly recommend you make use of the Writing Center throughout your time at DePaul. The Writing Center provides free peer writing tutoring for DePaul students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Writing Center tutors work with writers at all stages of the writing process, from invention to revision, and they are trained to identify recurring issues in your writing as well as address any specific questions or areas that you want to talk about. Visit www.depaul.edu/writing for more information.

Dean of Students Office: The Dean of Students Office (DOS) promotes student learning and ethical decision making in an inclusive and validating environment. Utilizing a comprehensive approach to student advocacy that is informed by DePaul's Catholic, Vincentian, and urban mission, the office collaborates with students, staff, faculty, parents and community partners to support students in reaching their academic and personal success.

The Dean of Students Office is primarily responsible for administering and adjudicating violations of the Code of Student Responsibility at DePaul University. Additionally, the office provides the administrative withdrawal and absence notification process, and can help students identify campus and community resources in times of personal and/or family crises and medical emergencies.

University Counseling Services

- Free, goal-focused, collaborative , short-term, confidential, individual, and group counseling services for DePaul's students.
- Brief Screening & Consultations (BSC) over the phone.
- Drop-in Emergent Care Services during office hours (Monday to Friday: 10 am to 4 pm).
- Collaboration with faculty, staff, family, and friends who want to support student care.
- Psychoeducational workshops and presentations for a variety of topics including adaptive coping skills, stress management, effective communication, relationships, time management, mindfulness, etc.
- Assistance with community based referrals for therapy and psychiatry services.

To speak directly to a therapist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, students should call 773-325-CARE (2273) and Press "1" when prompted.

To schedule an on-campus brief screening and consultation, students should call 773-325-CARE (2273) during regular business hours and Press "2" when prompted. More info can be found here: https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/ucaps.aspx

The Help Desk: The Help Desk provides technical assistance via phone, email and web for current DePaul students, faculty and staff. The Help Desk supports computers, network access, telephones, email accounts, and university instructional and administrative software. They can troubleshoot and resolve hardware and software related issues with both the Mac and Windows operating systems. Visit https://depaul.service-now.com/sp to get help.

Emergency Plan: An emergency can occur at any time, suddenly and without warning. Proper planning is essential to minimize the impact of any emergency on the university community, operations and facilities. The following link provides detailed information on Emergency Evacuation and Fire Alarm safety. The University will use the DPU Alert to announce school closing or other emergencies. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the primary outdoor assembly area for CDM will be Grant Park (Southeast corner of Jackson and Michigan Ave).