

SCWR 502 / 552: Writing for Thesis II

Winter 2023

Tuesday 5:45 – 9:00PM, CDM 723

Professor Scott Myers (he/him/his)

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312-362-1120

Office Hours: MON 11:00AM-2:00PM 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, January 31st.**

25%: Final Revised Draft. Students will receive maximum credit for submitting their Final Revised Draft by the due date and time: **Friday, March 15 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 22 by 5PM**.
- We will hold defense meetings with you individually on **April 26 between 1:00-5:00PM**.
- 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 23th 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 12th**.
- 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 9): 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 16): Discuss each student's preliminary Rewrite Plan: Part 1 (Assessment).

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

WEEK 3 (January 23): 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)

WEEK 4 (January 30): Review Group A revised pages.

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

WEEK 5 (February 6): 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).

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

WEEK 6 (February 13): 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).

WEEK 7 (February 20): Review Group B revised pages.

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

WEEK 8 (February 27): 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.

WEEK 9 (March 5): Review Group B (Feature) and Groups A and B (TV) revised pages.

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

WEEK 10 (March 12): 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 22nd 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

MON 11:00AM-2:00PM 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.

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 honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note 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](#).

DePaul University's Land Acknowledgement

At DePaul University, we acknowledge that we live and work on traditional Native lands that are home to well over one hundred different tribal nations. We extend our respect to all of them, including the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Odawa nations, who signed the Treaty of Chicago in 1821 and 1833. We also recognize the Ho-Chunk, Myaamia, Menominee, Illinois Confederacy, and Peoria people who also maintained relationships with this land.

We acknowledge that these sacred homelands were ruptured by the European invasion of the Americas. In 1493, Pope Alexander VI promulgated the Doctrine of Discovery, which seized Native lands and resources with impunity. This doctrine has been used by countries throughout the Americas, including the U.S., to legitimize colonial policies of displacement and genocide toward Native peoples and to justify colonial legacies of white superiority and global capitalism.

We appreciate that today Chicago is home to the sixth-largest urban Native population in the United States. We further recognize and support the enduring presence of Native peoples among our faculty, staff, and student body. And in the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul, we reaffirm our commitment, both as an institution and as individuals, to help make our community and our society a more equitable, welcoming, and just place for all.

Screenwriting Policy On the use of AI

The screenwriting program at DePaul is committed to fostering the unique voices and perspectives of up-and-coming screenwriters, as evidenced by our motto: “learn your craft, find your voice, make your mark.” Writers should be aware that AI (generative artificial intelligence) is a tool and only a tool. It does not create; it aggregates and repurposes previously published content. As such, AI may facilitate the story development process, but cannot replace what each individual writer brings to a story: their distinctive point of view and voice. We understand that students may wish to use AI tools to aid in the development and early drafts of screenplays and screenwriting assignments. To do so with academic integrity, students must understand and adhere to the following:

- Developing ideas, creative problem-solving, honing one’s voice, and engaging in rewriting are at the core of the writing process, and the use of AI is not a replacement for enhancing these fundamental skills.
- Acknowledge your use of AI. For any assignment that you complete using AI, you must include a paragraph that explains 1) what AI tool you used, 2) what prompts you used, and 3) a clear explanation of how it helped you engage in the writing process.
- AI-assisted work may be accepted as part of the development of any project (including story ideation, character development, world-building, basic outlining, etc.), but the entirety of your screenplay/writing assignment must be authored by you.

- AI makes mistakes. You are responsible for any errors or omissions made by the AI tool.
- Failure to adhere to these guidelines will be considered a violation of DePaul's Academic Integrity Policy.

Students with Disabilities

DePaul 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 (312) 362-8002 , Lincoln Park Campus (773) 325-1677
Email: csd@depaul.edu.

Students who register with the Center for Students with Disabilities are also invited to contact Dr. Gregory 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 [click here](#) for Services and Contact Information.

Academic Support Resources

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

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. [This 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).

COVID Policies

Currently, masks are not required in indoor spaces on campus. However, DePaul will continue to be a mask-friendly campus and wearing a mask will be highly recommended for all indoor spaces.

If you are joining a meeting or gathering and a participant asks you to wear a mask, please do so. If you need one, masks are available at a limited number of first-floor desk areas near building entrances.

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 [here](#).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found [here](#). 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.

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 and laptops must be silenced and stowed unless needed for course work.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class and arrive on time. Each unexcused absence equates to a loss of ten points from the student's final score. Three unexcused absences result in automatic course failure.

Excused Absence

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.

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 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.

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 your instructor to teaching, and these evaluation results are one component used in performance reviews (including salary raises and promotion/tenure). The evaluation of the instructor and course provides you an opportunity to make your voice heard regarding the quality of teaching at DePaul.

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.

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.