DC 301 Advanced Screenwriting I
Fall 2013
Tuesday 5:45PM – 9:00PM
14 East Jackson RM 802

Instructor: Matt Quinn
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Office 404 (243 S. Wabash Ave, Chicago, IL 60604)
Office Hours: Tuesday 11:30PM – 1:30PM and 5:00 – 5:45PM, Thursday 11:30am – 1:00pm

Summary of the Course
In this course, students study, analyze and produce motion picture scripts. This course emphasizes the use of traditional storytelling, classic mythology and how these devices apply to contemporary screenplays. Students will move from concept and treatment to a completed first act of a feature length screenplay of their own. This script will be completed, revised and polished in DC 302 and DC 303.

Learning Outcomes
• Students will enhance their knowledge of screenwriting conventions and script analysis through assigned readings and in-class workshops.
• Students will develop a feature length outline that adheres to three-act dramatic structure.
• Students will learn techniques to enhance audience identification for their story.
• Students will complete two drafts of the first act of a feature length screenplay.

Textbooks and Printed Resources
"Writing Movies for Fun and Profit" by Ben Garant and Thomas Lennon (Required)
ISBN-10: 1439186766
Additional assigned readings provided by the instructor

Prerequisites
DC201 Introduction to Screenwriting or DC101 Screenwriting for Majors

Grading
Class attendance and participation 10%
Group Discussion Forum Feedback 10%
Premise & Plot Point Assignments10%
Feature Length Step Outline 20%
Draft of First Act 20%
Final Draft of First Act 30%

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
Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

D2L
You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to:
https://login.depaul.edu/cas/login?service=https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/orgtools/CAS/Default.aspx
and enter using your campus connect logon and password. Once you are logged on, click on the

course number link and you will find links to the syllabus, course outline, video lectures, discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

D2L Group Feedback
Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, you have been placed in a group with three/four other students. You will submit outline assignments and pages to your group for Two times during the quarter, you will submit plot points and pages to your group for evaluation via the discussion forum on D2L. In addition, you will read the pages submitted by your group members and provide a minimum of three notes per script. Each group member will create a discussion thread for the week's submission (Example: John Smith's First Act). Group members will provide notes in the body of this thread.

In-Class Workshops
Every student, regardless of whether they are taking the course ground or online will have the first ten pages of their screenplay workshopped in class. I will create a discussion thread on D2L for the scripts that were workshopped, which will allow online and ground students to continue discussion that time did not allow for in class. The in-class workshops will begin Week 7 (October 29th) and run to the end of the quarter.

Course Outline
Week 1 – September 17th
Course Introduction, Business of Screenwriting, Loglines
Assignment: Three Premise Ideas, "Writing Movies for Fun and Profit" Chapters 1-3, Script Reading DELIVERY MAN

Week 2 – September 24th
Structure, Pitch Premise Ideas
Assignment: Plot Points, "Writing Movies for Fun and Profit" Chapter 23, D2L Group Feedback Plot Points, Script Reading GRAVITY

Week 3 – October 1st
Character & Conflict – Plot Point Outline Due
Assignment: Feature Length Outline, "Writing Movies for Fun and Profit" Chapters 24 and 25, Discussion Forum Comments, Script Reading 12 YEARS A SLAVE

Week 4 – October 8th
Act One, Tone & Voice
Assignment: Feature Length Outline, "Writing Movies for Fun and Profit" Appendix Sample Outlines, Script Reading AMERICAN HUSTLE

Week 5 – October 15th
Dialogue & Exposition – Step Outline Due
Assignment: Pages 1-10, "Writing Movies for Fun and Profit" Chapters 6 and 26

Week 6 – October 22nd
Scenes & Sequences
Assignment: Pages 10-20, "Writing Movies for Fun and Profit" Chapter 11

Week 7 – October 29th
Workshop
Assignment: Script Pages 20-30

Week 8 – November 5th
Workshop – First Act Due
Assignment: Rewrite First Act, D2L Group Feedback First Act

Week 9 – November 12th
Workshop
Assignment: Rewrite First Act

Week 10 – November 19th
Workshop
Assignment: Rewrite First Act

Week 11- November 26th
Workshop - *Final Draft Due*

Assignments
Three Premise Ideas
Develop three premise ideas to pitch in class on Tuesday, September 24th - I will pitch the online student loglines and you can view our critique via D2L. You will eventually develop one of these ideas into a feature length script for your final project. Each premise should include character (protagonist), conflict (what is the central conflict of the narrative?) and a sense of resolution. Sample premises will be provided Please bring a copy of the assignment to class for workshop and submit a copy to the corresponding Dropbox link on D2L. Online students must submit this assignment before 4pm on Tuesday, September 24th.

Plot Points
Develop brief description for your plot points - due Tuesday, October 1st via D2L. Logon to D2L, click on the Discussions tab, and select the link for your assigned group number. Create a new item for the discussion thread (Example: John Smith's Plot Points). In the body of this thread, present your logline (one sentence description of your script) and plot points in the following format:

Logline:
Hook:
Inciting Incident:
1st Act Turning Point:
2nd Act Turning Point:
Climax:
Resolution:

Review the loglines and plot points for each member of your group. Add comments to the corresponding discussion thread for the material you are reviewing. Keep it constructive - Minimum of two solid notes per script.

Please submit your logline and plot points by Friday, September 27th to your assigned group discussion forum and via the corresponding D2L Dropbox link. Your comments on your group member's plot points must be submitted to the D2L group discussion forum before class on Tuesday, October 1st.

Step Outline
A feature length outline should have anywhere from 50 - 100 scenes depending on the type of narrative (general rule of thumb is that there are less scenes for character-driven story/more scenes for plot driven material). It is critical that you provide enough scenes to sustain the length of a feature film. Coming up with 40 scenes or less is simply not enough material and will result in a significant deduction in your step outline grade. Please make a point to speak with me if you're planning to write an unconventional narrative that will require an unorthodox outline. Each scene of your step outline will contain a slug line for the location and time of day. The scenes should be numbered as they will eventually appear in your screenplay followed by a brief description of what will transpire in that scene. Additional sample outlines are provided in the appendix of "Writing Movies for Fun and Profit".

Example:
Scene 1: INT. DON CORELONE'S OFFICE - DAY
AMERIGO BONASERA, undertaker, tells DON VITO CORLEONE, the aging head of the successful Corleone crime family, the story of how his daughter was assaulted by two men. Don Corelone will help Amerigo deal with his problem in exchange for a favor in the future. The meeting, which is being held during the wedding of Corelone's daughter, is very matter-of-fact/business-like.

General Guidelines
- Use 12 pt. Courier New Font
- Make sure your scene descriptions are in present tense
- Use all CAPS when introducing a new character.

This assignment should be submitted to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link before class on Tuesday, October 15th.

First Act
You are expected to submit the first act of your feature length screenplay (minimum of 30 pages) to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link before class on Tuesday, November 5th. A couple of things to keep in mind, as this assignment is 20% 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 Syd Field's Screenplay, 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 first act must be at least thirty pages, but should not exceed forty 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.

Final Draft
You are expected to submit your revised first act (minimum of 30 pages) for your final assignment before class on Tuesday, November 26th to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link. A couple of things to keep in mind as this assignment is 30% of your final grade:

- The final version of your script should read as a marked improvement over your first effort
- You must include a cover page
- Use notes you received from the instructor, script workshops and coverage assignments 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
- 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 the textbook for this class, the scripts we read in class, and your instructor for assistance

- Your submission must be at least thirty pages

Attitude
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.

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.
Cell Phones/On Call: If you bring a cell phone to class, it must be off or set to a silent mode. Should you need to answer a call during class, students must leave the room in an undisruptive manner. Out of respect to fellow students and the professor, texting is never allowable in class. If you are required to be on call as part of your job, please advise me at the start of the course.

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 (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 (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 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.

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