

DC 408 Advanced Writing on Assignment

When: Monday · 5:45pm - 4:45pm
Where: 14 East Jackson Room 801 Loop Campus

Instructor: Matt Quinn · mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu · 312-362-5807 · CDM 509
Office hours: Mondays 1:30pm – 4:30pm and Tuesdays 12:00pm - 1:30pm & 4:45pm – 5:30pm

Summary of Course

This course provides a framework for students to complete a feature length screenplay within specific parameters provided by the instructor in ten weeks plus an additional treatment that would compliment their existing portfolio. Modeled after the techniques and deadlines of professional writing assignments, students learn how to meet the expectations of studio executives and producers without sacrificing their unique voice.

Learning Outcomes

- Students develop the ability to create realistic goals and meet strict submission deadlines.
- Students will improve their ability to receive constructive criticism through workshops and how to employ these notes in their writing.
- Students learn to write efficiently by focusing on manageable sequences and embracing three-act structure.
- Students will complete a feature length screenplay in ten weeks.

Prerequisites

DC 501

Grading

Class Attendance and Participation	10%
Weekly Pages Submissions	90%

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.

Textbooks

Readings provided by instructor

Attendance

Attendance and participation is mandatory. 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.

D2L

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to:

<https://login.depaul.edu/ldap/login?service=https%3a%2f%2fd2l.depaul.edu%2fd2l%2fcustom%2fcas> 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.

In-Class Workshops

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, every student will have three workshop sessions. The first session will focus on logline/plot points, the second on the first half of the script and the third on the second half of the script. Aside from the aforementioned parameters, how you elect to use this time is up to you. You can discuss issues you are having with structure, do a table read of your most recent pages, etc. Specific workshop times will be assigned by the instructor.

Course Outline

Week 1 – January 4th

Lecture: Course Intro, Writing on Assignment, Script Parameters
Assignment: Logline/Plot Points, Discussion Group Feedback

Week 2 – January 11th

Lecture: Pitch Screenplay Logline/Plot Points
Assignment: Pages 1-20

Week 3 – January 18th

No Class - Martin Luther King Day
University officially closed

Week 4 – January 25th

Lecture: Writing the First 50
Assignments: Pages 20-30

Week 5 – February 1st

Lecture: Applying Development Notes
Assignments: Pages 30-40, Discussion Group Feedback

Week 6 – February 8th

Lecture: First Act Workshop
Assignments: Pages 40-50

Week 7 – February 15th

Lecture: Writing the Last 50
Assignments: Pages 50-60

Week 8 – February 22nd

Lecture: Workshop
Assignments: Pages 60-70, Discussion Group Feedback

Week 9 – February 29th

Lecture: Workshop
Assignments: Pages 70-80

Week 10 – March 8th

Lecture: Workshop
Assignments: Pages 80-100

Week 11 – March 15th

Assignments: Final Pages Due on Friday March 18th by 11:59pm

Assignments**Page Submissions (90% of Final Grade)**

To ensure you complete the screenplay, you are expected to submit 10 pages per week starting Week 3 – You will be submitting a minimum of 90 total pages by the end the quarter. Each ten page submission is worth ten points for a total of 90 points – 90% of your final grade.

A few things to keep in mind:

- 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?"
- Please make sure your page submissions are saved as a PDF

Discussion Group Feedback (Participation Grade)

The instructor will assign you to a D2L online discussion group with four/five other students from class. Throughout the quarter, you will make three submissions to your group for feedback. When prompted, each group member will create a discussion thread for their submission. You will then read the submissions by your group members and provide a minimum of three notes in the body of the discussion threads created for each submission.

Submission 1: Logline/Plot Points

Create a discussion thread and provide 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:

This submission should be posted to D2L by Friday, January 8th by 11:59PM. Please provide feedback to each of your group members' submissions before class on Monday, January 11th.

Submission 2: Pages 1-30

Create a discussion thread for pages 1-30 of your screenplay. This submission should be posted to D2L by Tuesday, February 2nd by 11:59PM. Please provide feedback (minimum of three notes) to each of your group members' submissions before class on Monday, February 15th.

Submission 3: Pages 1-60

Create a discussion thread for pages 1- 60 of your screenplay. This submission should be posted to D2L by Tuesday, February 23rd by 11:59PM. Please provide feedback (minimum of three notes) to each of your group members' submissions before class on Monday, March 8th.

Final Draft (90% - See Page Submissions for Details)

You are expected to submit the final draft of your completed feature length screenplay by 11:59PM on Friday, March 18th via the corresponding Dropbox link on D2L for a final evaluation. Late submissions will not be accepted.

A few things to keep in mind:

- You must include a cover page
- Your submission must be at least 90 pages and should read as a complete screenplay
- 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 make sure the script is saved as a PDF

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

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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 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.

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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