

DePaul University
School of Cinematic Arts

DC 507-801: MFA SCREENWRITING THESIS II

T, 5:45-9:00 PM in 14 E. Jackson room 507, Loop Campus
Professor Brad Riddell: briddell@cim.depaul.edu, 312-362-5212
Office Hours: T 9:30 AM – 1PM in CDM 521 and by appointment.

Description:

This is the second of a two-course sequence in which 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.

Required Reading:

Screenwriting 101 by Film Crit Hulk (Amazon)

Objectives:

- Students will apply a successful rewrite process to their work
- Interpret notes and design a rewrite plan to address those notes
- Create professional deadline-driven script revisions
- Demonstrate mastery of cinematic writing style and narrative technique
- Employ a professional writing pace
- Operate effectively within the environment of a professional writer's room
- Evaluate others' script revisions objectively, comprehensively, and with tact

Outcomes:

- A complete revision plan
- A complete script revision plus a polish
- Delivery of the revised draft of the thesis screenplay
 - **NOTE:** The revised and polished second draft will be due to committee members by the end of day **March 18th.**

COURSE MANAGEMENT:

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to: <https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/home> and enter using your campus connect username and password. Once you are logged on, click on the course number link.

Schedule:

WEEK 1: Discussion of Film Crit Hulk, Revision Process

WEEK 2: Notes for Group B, **Farwell / Piotrkowski** monologue exercise.

WEEK 3: Notes for Group A, **Jones / Bates** monologue exercise.

WEEK 4: Group B rewrite plan, rewritten Act One, **Ehrentreu / Simon** monologues.

WEEK 5: Group A rewrite plan, rewritten Act One, **Jakubow / Chung** monologues.

WEEK 6: Group B rewritten to midpoint, **Reynolds / Miller** monologues.

WEEK 7: Group A rewritten to midpoint, **Fox / Wise** monologues.

WEEK 8: Group B End Act Two, **Winters / Lizardi** monologues.

WEEK 9: Group A End Act Two.

WEEK 10: Group B End Act Three.

WEEK 11: Group A End Act Three.

Finished, revised thesis scripts due to committees by MARCH 18th at 6 PM.

Procedures:

Classes may include lectures but will always feature a workshop session. It is *vital* important that all students submit work on time, and that all students **pre-read** the material thoroughly before class to offer detailed notes. As we have a great deal to accomplish, we will need to be efficient and effective in our discussions. We will focus on macro-level notes in class. Minor notes will be handed or sent to each writer, from each writer, in each and every class.

I want to know that you read the material by the way in which you discuss it. If I suspect you didn't read it, I will ask to see your notes.

Beginning week 4, students will be divided into two groups to maximize attention on the greatest amount of material possible. Look under "Groups" on D2L.

Beginning Week 3, 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 critiqued.

Software:

Final Draft is the industry standard and provides functions that will be useful in this class. You should own it and be using it by now. We can get you a discount. That said, I prefer all work be delivered in PDF format all the time.

Grading:

Your weekly writing amounts to 20% of your final grade. We will review your progress at the midterm, but if you are concerned before then, please ask.

Participation is absolutely crucial. It will account for 20% of your final grade. This means reading the material, contributing with great notes, and maintaining a positive, supportive attitude in the room.

Your completed and approved rewrite plan will serve as the midterm and represents 10% of your grade.

The completed screenplay is worth 50%. Execution accounts for 25% -- is it finished and how good is it? Effort accounts for the other 25% -- how committed are you?

Late work will not be accepted. 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.

C- is the minimum passing grade in this class.

Attendance:

Tardiness and absences are counterproductive to your goal of becoming a great writer and my goal of being a great teacher. Contact me ASAP if you will be late or absent. Unapproved absences forfeit an entire letter grade.

Decorum:

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. Personal attacks and disruptive actions will not be tolerated.

Laptops:

Professional writers do not sit in meetings staring at a screen. They talk to each other and their employers/colleagues. If your computer and the mind attached to it drift away from class and I so much as suspect you of online activities not related to the task at hand, you will lose laptop privileges for the entire semester.

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 your professor. But know this: 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.

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.