

# DC 405 Topics in Screenwriting

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**When:** Monday & Wednesday · 5:45pm - 9:00pm  
**Where:** 14 East Jackson RM 211 Loop Campus

**Instructor:** Matt Quinn · [mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu](mailto:mquinn@cdm.depaul.edu) · 312-362-5807 · Daley RM 209  
**Office hours:** Monday and Wednesday 12:00pm – 1:15pm and 5:00pm – 5:30pm

## Summary of Course

Advanced study in screenwriting focusing on a specific genre each quarter such as: Science Fiction, Comedy, Action-Adventure, Nonfiction, etc. The topic this quarter is the developing the animated series.

This advanced course will focus on creating a viable animated series, developing an original pitch package, and providing a framework in which to navigate the development process to get your project set up at a network.

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will examine the narrative conventions of the animated series for adult, children, and preschool/educational audiences.
- Students will analyze the current market for animated series on network, cable, and streaming services.
- Students will create a series bible for an original animated series that showcases their unique voice as a writer.
- Students will assemble a practical step outline for the animated series pilot episode.
- Students will develop a vetted story pitch for an animated series.

## Prerequisites

None

## Grading

Class Attendance and Participation	10%
Three Loglines	10%
Series Bible Draft I	10%
Series Bible Draft II	20%
Pilot Step Outline	20%
Series Pitch	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.*

## Textbooks

- "Animation Development" by David B. Levy ISBN-10: 1581156618 (Recommended)
- Additional 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.

## In-Class Workshops

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, you will be participating in small group workshop sessions throughout the quarter that will enable you to further develop your animated series. Please refer to the course outline for specific workshop dates.

## 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.

## Course Outline

### Class 1 – June 12<sup>th</sup>

Lecture: Course Intro, the Animated Series  
 Workshop: Series Study  
*Assignment: Three loglines*

### Class 2 – June 14<sup>th</sup>

Lecture: Animation Network Development  
 Workshop: Series Study  
*Assignment: Three loglines*

### Class 3 – June 19<sup>th</sup>

Lecture: Creating the Animated Series  
 Workshop: Three Loglines  
*Assignment: Series Bible*

#### **Class 4 – June 21<sup>st</sup>**

Lecture: Animation Series Bible  
 Workshop: Series Study  
*Assignment: Series Bible*

#### **Class 5 – June 26<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Pitching the Animated Series, Sizzle Reels  
*Assignment: Series Pitch*

#### **Class 6 – June 28<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Series Bibles  
*Assignment: Series Pitch*

#### **Class 7 – July 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Lecture: Writing the Pilot I  
*Assignment: Series Pitch, Pilot Step Outline*

#### **Class 8 – July 5<sup>th</sup>**

Workshop: Series Pitch  
*Assignment: Series Pitch*

#### **Class 9 – July 10<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Writing the Pilot II  
 Workshop: Pilot Step Outline  
*Assignment: Series Pitch*

#### **Class 10 – July 12<sup>th</sup>**

Individual Meetings for Final Pitch Presentations

## **Assignments**

### **Three Loglines (10% of final grade)**

Develop three loglines for an animated series to pitch in class on Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup>. You will eventually develop one of these ideas into an animated television series that you will be working on for the duration of the course. Each logline should include character (protagonist), conflict (what is the central conflict of the series?) and a sense of setting/world. Please bring a copy of the

assignment to class for workshop and submit a PDF file with the loglines to the corresponding Dropbox link on D2L before class on Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup>.

### **Series Bible Draft I (10% of final grade)**

Create a series bible that provides a thorough overview of the animated series. While there is no fixed template for a series bible, it should include sections on the following:

- Overview
- Origin/Inspiration
- Themes
- World
- Characters
- Season One Breakdown

The Series Bible Draft I must be a minimum of five pages and saved as a PDF to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link before class on Monday, June 26<sup>th</sup>. You will receive feedback on your bible from your instructor and group members during in-class workshop on Wednesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **Series Bible Draft II (20% of final grade)**

The revised version of your Series Bible must be a minimum of five pages and saved as a PDF to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link before 5:45pm on Wednesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Pilot Step Outline (20% of final grade)**

A Pilot Step Outline should have anywhere from 10-30 scenes depending on the type of series you are writing. It is critical that you provide enough scenes to sustain the length of your pilot episode. Coming up with 10 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.

Example:

Scene 1: INT. STONE DUNGEON - DAY

STERLING ARCHER, aka the world's most dangerous spy, is being interrogated and tortured by CRENSAW, a KGB Colonel. It is quickly revealed that Archer is participating in a simulation exercise overseen by his overbearing mother MALORY ARCHER, director of ISIS (International Secret Intelligence Service).

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.
- Must be submitted as a PDF file

This assignment will be workshopped in-class on Monday, July 10<sup>th</sup>. The final draft of the assignment must be submitted to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link by 5:45pm on Wednesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>.

### **Series Pitch (30% of final grade)**

You will present a 15-minute story pitch for an original animated television series the week of July 10<sup>th</sup> in an individual meeting with the instructor. The pitch document, which is a verbatim written version of your presentation, must be saved as a PDF to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link before 5:45pm on Wednesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>. Sign-up for individual meeting will begin after Class 5. You should have a rough version of your pitch to present during an in-class group workshop on Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **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. Don't miss this opportunity to provide feedback!

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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