



# DePaul University | School of Cinematic Arts

DC 303 – 701

## Rewriting the Feature Film Screenplay

<b>Instructor:</b>	James Choi	<b>Quarter:</b>	Fall 2017/2018
<b>Office Hour:</b>	MON 11-1pm and 4:45-5:30pm TUES 2-5:30pm	<b>Section:</b>	701
<b>Office Location:</b>	CDM 708	<b>Class#:</b>	12849
<b>Email:</b>	jchoi26@depaul.edu	<b>Class Time:</b>	Mon from 5:45 to 9:00pm
<b>Phone:</b>	(323) 365-4624	<b>Class Location:</b>	14EAST RM207 Loop Campus

### Summary of Course

This class focuses on rewriting the feature film screenplay. Through workshops and course discussions, students will learn how to identify missteps in their writing and develop a practical means to efficiently address these issues moving forward. Students must possess a complete feature length script to rewrite in order to enroll in the course.

### Learning Outcomes

- Students will develop a solid understanding of the craft and tools of screenplay revision.
- Students will formulate a viable rewriting plan for their feature length screenplay.
- Students will analyze peer scripts to identify narrative concerns and articulate constructive feedback.
- Students will create a polished professional feature length spec screenplay.

### Prerequisites

None

### Grading

Attendance & Participation	10%
Note Overview	10%
Rewrite Plan	20%
Pages 1-50	30%
Pages 50-100	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 and Printed Resources

"Screenwriting is Rewriting: The Art and Craft of Professional Revision" by Jack Epps Jr. ISBN-10: 1628927402 (Required)

## 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 your current draft, the second on your rewrite plan, and the third on Pages 1-50 of your rewrite. Workshop groups and times will be assigned by the instructor.

## Course Outline (*Subject to Change – Always check D2L for the most up-to-date schedule, due dates and assignments*)

### Class 1 – Monday, September 11

Lecture: Course Intro, Writing is Rewriting, The Pass Method

*Assignment: Self Evaluation, Script Reading Hell or High Water -*

### Class 2 – Monday, September 18

Lecture: Notes, Hell or High Water Breakdown

*Assignment: Read Group Screenplays, Text Reading Chapter 1*

### Class 3 – Monday, September 25

Lecture: Interpreting Feedback, Group Workshop

Due: Group Feedback

*Assignment: Note Overview, Text Reading Chapters 2 & 3*

### Class 4 – Monday, October 2

Lecture: Rewrite Plan, Foundation Pass

Due: Note Overview

*Assignment: Rewrite Plan, Text Reading Chapter 4 & 6*

### **Class 5 – Monday, October 9**

Lecture: Character Pass, Group Workshop

Due: Rewrite Plan

*Assignment: Rewrite Feature, Text Reading Chapters 5 & 7*

### **Class 6 – Monday, October 16**

Lecture: Setup, Story and Theme Pass

*Assignment: Rewrite Feature, Text Reading Chapters 8 & 9*

### **Class 7 – Monday, October 23**

Lecture: Structure and Plot Pass

*Assignment: Rewrite Feature, Text Reading Chapters 10-13*

### **Class 8 – Monday, October 30**

No Class: Individual Meetings

Due: Pages 1-50

*Assignment: Rewrite Feature*

### **Class 9 – Monday, November 6**

Lecture: Complications and Relationships Pass, Group Workshop

*Assignment: Rewrite Feature, Text Reading Chapters 15-19*

### **Class 10 – Monday, November 13**

Lecture: Consistency Pass, Group Workshop

***Due: Pages 50-100 on Monday, November 20 at 5:45PM –***

*Assignment: Rewrite Feature, Text Reading Chapters 20-23*

## **Assignments**

### **Note Overview (10% of Final Grade)**

Complete the Note Overview template (available to download on D2L)- using feedback on your feature length screenplay from the instructor, workshop, and self-evaluation. These vetted concerns should be listed as bullet points under each category heading. Feel free to edit the headings to align with the notes you received and order them by severity. It is important to do a thorough job on this, as the overview will act as the foundation for your rewrite plan. You are expected to submit a PDF copy of the note overview to the corresponding Dropbox link on D2L before class on Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **Rewrite Plan (20% of Final Grade)**

Complete the Rewrite Plan template (available to download on D2L). Each chart heading is broken into two categories (Concerns/Solutions). The concerns should be taken from your Note Overview assignment, broken into the appropriate categories, and then order by severity. Across from each concern, list possible solutions. The length of your Rewrite Plan will depend on the amount of work that needs to be done. Keep the cause-and-effect nature of cinematic storytelling in mind. You must consider the effect these alterations will have on the rest of the narrative. It is important to

do a thorough job on this overview, as it will act as the foundation for your feature length rewrite. Please bring enough copies of this assignment for your group members to review in-class and submit a PDF copy to the corresponding Dropbox link on D2L before class on Monday, October 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Pages 1-50 (30% of Final Grade)**

You are expected to submit pages 1-50 of your revised feature length screenplay to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link before class on Monday, October 31<sup>st</sup>. A couple of things to keep in mind, as this assignment is 30% of your final grade:

- The revised draft should read as a marked improvement over your first effort.
- Use your rewrite plan in order to craft your revised draft.
- Your revised script must be at least 50 pages.
- 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 texts for the course, 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.
- Avoid exposition heavy dialogue - Always ask yourself, "Is there a way I can communicate this information visually?"
- 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.

### **Pages 50-100 (30% of Final Grade)**

You are expected to submit pages 50-100 of your revised feature length screenplay to the corresponding D2L Dropbox link by 5:45PM on Monday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. A couple of things to keep in mind, as this assignment is 30% of your final grade:

- Please submit your entire revised screenplay for continuity.
- The revised draft should read as a marked improvement over your first effort.
- Use your rewrite plan in order to craft your revised draft.
- Your revised script must be at least 50 pages.
- 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.
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## 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