DC 404 REWRITING THE FEATURE

INSTRUCTOR: Lee Madsen
14 E. Jackson Room 209
Office: CDM 434 Office Hours: Tuesday 4-5:30PM
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This class focuses on rewriting the feature film screenplay. Through group 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. Student must posses a complete feature length script in order to enroll in the course.

Prerequisite: None

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
• Students will enhance their knowledge of screenwriting conventions and script analysis through assigned readings and in-class workshops.
• Students will learn rewriting strategies and techniques.
• Students will learn techniques to enhance audience identification for their story.
• Students will complete a thorough rewrite of a feature length screenplay.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
"Screenwriting is Rewriting: The Art and Craft of Professional Revision" by Jack Epps Jr. ISBN-10: 1628927402
Additional assigned readings provided by the instructor posted on D2L.

COURSE POLICIES:

-Attendance:
Each week's class consists of lectures and screenings; attendance is mandatory. For the purposes of this class an absence is defined as not showing up for class or showing up 15 minutes, or more, late for a class. All absences will result in a reduction of the attendance/participation grade.

-Assignments:
Reading assignments must be completed by the date to which they are assigned. Reasonable deadlines are given for completion for each assignment. Consequently late assignments will not be accepted without prior consent of the instructor.

-Plagiarism:
Plagiarism on assignments or cheating on tests are serious offenses and earn the student a failing grade for the class. There are no exceptions to this rule. If you are in doubt about the definitions of plagiarism, consult your student handbook.

-Course Lectures/Reading Assignments:
Lecture presentations will occur weekly. The textbooks offer an opportunity for independent learning that supplements the lecture presentations. The instructor will use both the classroom and the textbooks. Lectures may introduce additional material not available in the readings, and the readings may explore concepts not mentioned in class. BOTH SOURCES ARE NEEDED.

-Content Changes:
Depending on time factors, the assignments projected for the term may require slight alteration or rescheduling.

-Sexual Harassment:
The policy as specified in the student handbook will be adhered to in this class.

-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 un-disruptive 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.

GRADING:
Class attendance and participation 10%
Logline/Plot Points/Self-Critique 5%
Character Bio 5%
Script Feedback 5%
Note Overview 10%
Rewrite Plan 15%
Rewritten Draft of Screenplay 50%

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.

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK ONE
Course Introduction, Loglines & Plot Points
Assignment: Submit your current draft via D2L.
Assignment: Loglines & Plot Points & Self-Critique
Assignment: Character Biography, Text Reading Chapter 5

WEEK TWO
Lecture: Notes
Workshop: Loglines & Plot Points and Character Bio
Assignment: Read Group Screenplays, Text Reading Chapter 1

WEEK THREE
Lecture: Interpreting Feedback
Workshop: Group Feedback
Assignment: Note Overview, Text Reading Chapters 2 & 3

WEEK FOUR
Lecture: Rewrite Plan, Foundation Pass
Workshop
Assignment: Rewrite Plan, Text Reading Chapter 4 & 6

WEEK FIVE
Lecture: Character Pass
Workshop
Assignment: Rewrite Feature, Text Reading Chapter 7

WEEK SIX
Lecture: Setup, Story and Theme Pass
Workshop
Assignment: Text Reading Chapters 8 & 9

WEEK SEVEN
Lecture: Structure and Plot Pass
Workshop
Assignment: Text Reading Chapters 10-13

WEEK EIGHT
Lecture: Complications and Relationships Pass
Due: Pages 1 - 50
Workshop
Assignment: Text Reading Chapters 15-19

WEEK NINE
Lecture: Consistency Pass
Workshop
Assignment: Text Reading Chapters 20-23

WEEK TEN
Workshop

WEEK ELEVEN
Final Draft Due

ASSIGNMENTS:

Logline & Plot Points & Self-Critique
Develop brief description for your plot points - due Tuesday, April 3rd. Please bring a copy of the assignment to class for workshop and submit a copy to the Dropbox on D2L. Your logline (one sentence description of your script) and plot points should be in the following format:

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

In addition, critique your screenplay. What's your take on the current draft? Include in the critique the following:

- Your impulse to write the story. (The reason you wanted to write this story, the origin of the idea, what drew you to the story, what hooked you into the story.)
- The strengths of the draft in your opinion.
- The weaknesses of the draft in your opinion.
- What do you want to focus on in this draft? What do you want to accomplish with this re-write?

There is no minimum or maximum page requirement – whatever it takes.

Character Biography
Write a character biography for the protagonist of your story - due Tuesday, April 3rd. Focus on the character's backstory. Use the in-class discussion as a guide. Remember, the key to a dimensional character, write in the first person, as if he or she is talking to the reader. Be as specific as you can – the more details the better. Please bring a copy of the assignment to class for workshop and submit a copy to the Dropbox on D2L.

Note Overview
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 Tuesday, April 24th.

Rewrite Plan
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 Tuesday, May 1st.

Final Draft

You are expected to submit your revised draft (minimum of 90 pages) on Tuesday, June 5th to the
Submissions on D2L. A couple of things to keep in mind, as this assignment is 50% of your final grade:

- Show don't tell. Show don't tell. Show don't tell. Show don't tell.
- 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?"
- Use your plot points as a guide.
- Use notes you received from the instructor, script workshops and coverage assignments to craft your revised draft
- The final version of your script should read as a marked improvement over your first effort
- Characters, dialogue, structure and scene work should be completely reevaluated and enhanced
- Spelling, grammar and punctuation count - Proofread your work.
- Standard screenwriting formatting is required. Refer to Syd Field's Screenplay or The Hollywood Standard, the scripts we read in class, and your instructor for assistance.
- Re-read your narrative for clarity - It may be a good idea to have a friend/ family member look over the script as well
- You must include a cover page
- Your submission must be at least ninety pages

SCHOOL POLICIES:

- 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 Instructor Evaluation:
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 Campus Connect.

- Email:
Email is the primary means of communication between faculty and students enrolled in this course outside of class time. Students should be sure their email listed under "demographic information" at Campus Connect is correct.

- 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.

- 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:
http://
www.cdm.depaul.eduCurrent%20StudentsPagesPoliciesandProcedures.aspx.

- Incomplete:
An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family, a serious illness, etc. Any such reason must be documented. Any incomplete request must be made at least two weeks before the final, and approved by the Dean of the College of Computing and Digital Media. Any consequences resulting from a poor grade for the course will not be considered as valid reasons for such a request.

- Resources for 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:
Lewis Center 1420, 25 East Jackson Blvd.
Phone number: (312)362-8002
Fax: (312)362-6544

TTY: (773)325.7296