

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

School of Cinematic Arts

Rewriting the Feature Film Script | SCRW 303 / 403 – Section 701 | 2019-2020 Autumn

MON 5:45-9:00PM | Daley – Room 207

Instructor: Kat O'Brien | Email: kobrie55@depaul.edu

Office Hours: **Please email for appointment.** WED 10:30AM-1:30PM | Daley 200B

SCWR 303 Rewriting the Feature

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.**

Prerequisites: None

Course Outcomes: Students will complete a rewrite plan and a full rewrite of an existing original feature screenplay.

Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- organize and assess script feedback from their peers and the professor
- devise a detailed plan for a comprehensive rewrite
- revise their screenplay at a professional pace
- evaluate the work of their peers and formulate helpful feedback

Required Textbooks:

- Screenwriting is Rewriting: The Art and Craft of Professional Revision by Jack Epps, Jr., ISBN13: 9781628927405

Previous Course Number: DC 303

COURSE MANAGEMENT

This course is housed and managed on **D2L**. There students will find the syllabus, course outline, announcements, reading and writing assignments, discussion boards, and additional materials. Log in to D2L enter using your campus connect logon and password. Once you are logged in, click on the course number link and you will find our home page and links to the course content.

Feedback is an essential part of the writing process. To facilitate this, every student will have at least three workshop sessions devoted to their script. The first will be a small group workshop, the second and third will be individual workshops and will focus on your rewrite plan, and the first 50 pages of your rewrite.

In Week 1, the class will be divided into reading groups. Each class session will involve breaking off into smaller groups to workshop each student's story.

***NOTE: You are responsible for reading each of your group's weekly writing assignments before every class session, unless otherwise noted.**

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One: Sept 16

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Course Intro, The Art of the Rewrite

ASSIGNMENT ONE: Read partner script. Feedback on their script *due in class next week (9/23)*

Week Two: Sept 23

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: How To Give and Get Story Notes I Notes Workshop

ASSIGNMENT TWO: Top 3 Notes / Rewrite Plan for your script due in class next week (9/30) 30%

Week Three: Sept 30

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Small Group Story Meetings I 1x1 Rewrite Plan Assessment

ASSIGNMENT THREE: Rewrite Feature (Act 1 - Page 25) *due in class next week (10/7)*

Week Four: Oct 7

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Nailing The Set Up I Table Reads - Select Rewrites Pages 1-25

ASSIGNMENT FOUR: Rewrite Feature (Act 2A - Page 37) *due in class next week (10/14)*

Week Five: Oct 14

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Tracking Goals I Table Reads - Select Rewrites Pages 15-37

ASSIGNMENT FIVE: Rewrite Feature (Act 2B - Page 50) *due in class next week (10/21)*

Week Six: Oct 21

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Raising Stakes I Table Reads - Select Rewrites Pages 32-50

ASSIGNMENT SIX: Rewrite Part I Pages 1-50 due this week Wed 10/23 by 9AM (30%)

Week Seven: Oct 28 – NO CLASS

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Individual Story Meetings I Page 1-50 Assessment

ASSIGNMENT SEVEN: Rewrite Feature (Act 2C – Page 62) *due in class next week (11/4)*

Week Eight: Nov 4

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Stakes Have Consequences I Table Reads - Select Rewrites Pages 50-62

ASSIGNMENT EIGHT: Rewrite Feature (Act 2D – Page 75) *due in class next week (11/11)*

Week Nine: Nov 11

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Horns of Dilemma - Select Rewrites Pages 62-75

ASSIGNMENT NINE: Rewrite Feature (Act 3) *due in class next week (11/18)*

Week Ten: Nov 18

LECTURE & WORKSHOP: The Climax and Ending – Select Rewrites Pages 75-100

ASSIGNMENT TEN: Rewrite Part II Pages 50-100 due Final Exam Week Mon 11/25 by 545PM (30%)

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance / Participation is mandatory and will count as 10% of your overall grade. 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.

Assignments

Some of the weekly assignments (**Assignments 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9**) will be reviewed as progress checks towards your Attendance / Participation grade (10%).

The following are the 3 Big Assignments, comprising 90% of your grade for this class:

ASSIGNMENT TWO: Top 3 Notes / Rewrite Plan for your script due in class Mon 9/30 (30%)

Using my macro feedback Week 1 and your group's specific feedback Week 2, gut-check and self-determine your **Top 3 Notes**. Consider these your top 3 priorities for further revision and your focus for this next rewrite that we'll complete in this 10-week quarter. We'll workshop these Rewrite Plans 1x1 and in small groups during class Week 3.

ASSIGNMENT SIX: Rewrite Part I Pages 1-50 due this week Wed 10/23 by 9AM (30%)

You are expected to submit pages 1-50 of your revised feature length screenplay to D2L.

Tips 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.

ASSIGNMENT TEN: Rewrite Part II Pages 50-100 due Final Exam Week Mon 11/25 by 545PM (30%)

You are expected to submit pages 50-100 of your revised feature length screenplay to D2L.

Tips 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.

- 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.

Grading

Participation 10%

Top 3 Notes / Rewrite Plan 30%

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.

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.

Decorum and 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.

Creative Subject Matter

As this is a creative writing class, controversial subject matter may make its way into the conversation. Students have every right to express themselves artistically in their writing and address challenging issues so long as the work does not glorify hate of any kind. If you become uncomfortable with a conversation for personal reasons, you may be excused from the remainder of that class without penalty. Obvious inclusion of individuals from the class will not be tolerated in submitted material.

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 students will be notified 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!

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