

DEPAUL
UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF CINEMATIC ARTS



The Second City

January 2020

Course Title: SCWR 472 Improvisation for Comedic Storytellers III

Instructor: Jeff Griggs

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Office Hours: Monday 4:00pm-5:45pm, Second City Training Center

Class Time & Day: Monday, 5:45pm – 9:00pm, Second City room 208

Description:

This advanced course explores the intersection between improvisation and the screenwriting process. Emphasis will be placed on the structures that comedic moments can take, from joke construction through longer narrative forms. Students will develop basic concepts into polished written scenes and will revise using targeted improvisations.

Prerequisites:

SCWR 471 Improvisation for Comedic Storytellers II

Learning Objectives:

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

- Apply the process of improvisation to generate ideas and explore existing scripted material
- Breakdown a written script to identify areas that can be edited through improvisation
- Demonstrate how improvisation applies to the exploration of a variety of scene types
- Assess how comedic games and devices scale across various narrative forms
- Demonstrate increased proficiency in the fundamentals of improvisation

Textbooks: There is no required textbook needed for this course. Assigned readings and handouts will be provided by the instructor.

D2L

You will be using D2L extensively in this course. To log on, go to:

<https://d2l.depaul.edu/d2l/home/650286> 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 (if applicable), discussion forums, weekly assignments, etc.

Grading:

Class Attendance- 20%

Collaboration and Participation- 30%

Assignments- 30%

Final- 20%

A 100-93

A- 90-92

The instructor judged the student to have accomplished the stated objectives of the course in an EXCELLENT manner.

B+ 87-89

B 83-86

B- 80-82

The instructor judged the student to have accomplished the stated objectives of the course in a VERY GOOD manner.

C+ 77-79

C 73-76

C- 70-72

The instructor judged the student to have accomplished the stated objectives of the course in a SATISFACTORY manner.

D 69-60

The instructor judged the student to have accomplished the stated objectives of the course in a POOR manner. (A grade of D will not fulfill the requirements in a major field of concentration)

F 0-59

The instructor judged the student NOT to have accomplished the stated objectives of the course.

Attendance:

In class attendance and participation is mandatory for this class. An absence, which is defined as not showing up to class, arriving more than 15 minutes late to class or departing before class is formally dismissed will constitute a reduction in your overall grade. Absent students will be required to participate in a make-up assignment where they will respond to a specific exercise or topic posted by the instructor.

Week 1:

TOPIC – Diagnostics, Structure, Scenework
DAY – Intro, Table Setting, Ensemble
WARM UP
PRESENTATION – Structure in Improv
EXECUTION – Outlining Scenic Improv
HOMEWORK – Write an outline for an improvised scene.

Week 2:

TOPIC – Improvised Film
DAY – Executing an improvised short.
PRESENTATION – Improv in digital media.
EXECUTION – Create an outline for a digital short. Execute the digital short.
HOMEWORK – Group project: Vidiocy

Week 3:

TOPIC – Analysis, Revision, & Evaluation
DAY – Watch the previous weeks shorts.
PRESENTATION – Execution discussion.
EXECUTION – Group evaluation
HOMEWORK – Provide a critical analysis of one of the shorts.

Week 4:

TOPIC – Auditory Influences
DAY – Creating through sound inspiration to effect tone and structure.
PRESENTATION – Sound, Tone, Plot
EXECUTION – Silent scenes. Soundtrack scenes.
HOMEWORK – Film and edit a soundtrack scene.

Week 5:

TOPIC – Satire & Improv Comedy
DAY – Using satire to make a statement.
PRESENTATION – The importance of satire in comedy.
EXECUTION – Satirical sketches.
HOMEWORK – Satirical short.

Week 6:

TOPIC– Parody

DAY – Utilizing a formula and structure to create a parody.

PRESENTATION – Parody in TV & Film

EXECUTION – Improvise parody scenes. Outline parody scenes.

HOMEWORK – Film and edit a parody scene.

Week 7:

TOPIC – Curb & Reno 911

DAY – Outlining Improvised Productions.

PRESENTATION – Analyzing the structure of Improv based productions.

EXECUTION – Create an outline for a Curb or Reno inspired digital short. Execute the digital short.

HOMEWORK – Group project: Curb or Reno Digital short

Week 8:

TOPIC – Punching Up

DAY – Improv to script.

PRESENTATION – Utilizing improv to punch up a script.

EXECUTION – Script doctoring.

HOMEWORK – Script doctor a scene that will be assigned to you.

Week 9:

TOPIC – Ensemble

DAY – Creating through collaboration.

EXECUTION – Writers room.

HOMEWORK – Individual writing assignments.

Week 10:

TOPIC – Writers Room

DAY – Finishing touches on the writer's room.

EXECUTION – Finalize script.

FINAL:

TOPIC - Based on our viewings and discussions of Curb Your Enthusiasm and Reno 911, write a structured treatment for a comedic film where the dialogue would be improvised. The treatment should be thoroughly outlined and be 4 to 5 pages long.

Assignments- TBD

Collaboration and Participation

Collaboration is contingent to your commitment to the process, group ensemble and taking individual risks in the exercises and working successfully with your peers. Lack of participation is not acceptable. Improvisation is built on discovery and working collaboratively with the group to achieve a goal. Sharing your voice by asking questions and supporting your peers during improvisation group work engages you in the process as an active participant.

Final Term Project- TBD

Based on our viewings and discussions of *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Reno 911*, write a structured treatment for a comedic film where the dialogue would be improvised. The treatment should be thoroughly outlined and be 4 to 5 pages long.

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.

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

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. Please see <https://resources.depaul.edu/teaching-commons/teaching/Pages/online-teaching-evaluations.aspx> for additional information.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

This course will be subject to the university's academic integrity policy. More information can be found at <https://offices.depaul.edu/oaa/faculty-resources/teaching/academic-integrity/Pages/default.aspx>.

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.edu/Current%20Students/Pages/PoliciesandProcedures.aspx>

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

DePaul University is committed to ensuring equal access to its educational and extracurricular opportunities for students with disabilities. The Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) offers reasonable academic accommodations and services to support our students. We also serve as a resource to the many university departments that have a responsibility to accommodate students.

Please see <https://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/about/departments/Pages/csd.aspx> for Services and Contact Information.

Course Policies

Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class and to remain for the duration. Coming 15 minutes late or leaving 15 minutes early constitutes an absence for the student. The overall grade for participation drops one-third after any absence. Three absences for any reason, whether excused or not, may constitute failure for the course.

Class Discussion: Student participation in class discussions will be measured in two ways. First, students are highly encouraged to ask questions and offer comments relevant to the day's topic. Participation allows the instructor to "hear" the student's voice when grading papers. Secondly, students will be called upon by the instructor to offer comments related to the reading assignments. Students must keep up with the reading to participate in class discussion.

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.