CP 412   Feature Film Development

When: Wednesdays · 6:30pm-9pm

Instructor: Erin Rodman · erod917@gmail.com · (310) 927-2525
Office hours: Email me to set a time.

➔   **Course Description**

This course focuses on feature film development from a producer's perspective. Students will evaluate completed screenplays and the producer's role in developing them into films through weekly lectures, class discussions, written assignments, and workshops.

➔   **Learning Outcome**

Students should be able to:

• Analyze a screenplay's structure and characters.
• Evaluate screenplays' concept and hook.
• Evaluate screenplays' cost to produce.
• Evaluate screenplays' potential for director and cast.
• Analyze the marketplace for the screenplay.

➔   **Assignment Details**

Attendance and Participation (10 points)

Attendance – Every class is mandatory. Absences must be approved in advance of class.
Participation - Students are encouraged to ask questions during lectures and Q&A's with industry professionals.

Weekly Assignments (70 points)

There will be **seven** written assignments over the course of the quarter. Each is worth ten points.

Final Assignment – Ideas for development (20 points)

Students will be required to submit **two** project ideas for development that include a premise, genre comps, writer, director and cast ideas, as well as statement of justification, and why the elements (characters, themes, plot) will connect with audiences and critics.

Missed deadlines will result in assignment failure. All assignments must be typed and free of grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors.

➔ **Grading**

Attendance and Participation	10 points
Weekly Scene Assignments	70 points
Final	20 points

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.

➔ **Class Schedule**

Note: This schedule is subject to change.

Week 1 – September 8 - INTRO

Introduction. Review syllabus and class requirements. Overview of the development process. Development case study – CARE BEARS.

Assignment 1: Choose 3 scripts from the past five years of The Black List (www.blcklst.com / Annual Lists) that have NOT been produced. Write a brief review of your thoughts. No less than half a page, single spaced, and no more than one page. *Due Monday, September 13 by 11:30pm*

Week 2 – September 15 - ANATOMY OF A SCRIPT

Class discussion of Assignment 1. Script structure.

Assignment 2: Choose two movies of different genres and break down their basic structure. *Due Monday, September 20 by 11:30pm*

Week 3 – September 22 - CHARACTER

Class discussion of Assignment 2. How to create a character and character arc.

Reading: Choose two character driven screenplays to read and two character driven movies to watch. Instructor will share a list of scripts and movies to choose from.

Week 4 – September 29 - GENRES

Class discussion of prior week's reading. Genre elements, and different ways they are developed.

Assignment 4: Read 3 scripts from three different genres. Write no less than half a page, single spaced, about the ways in which each one delivers on the genre elements. *Due Monday, October 4 by 11:30pm*

Week 5 – October 6 – PREMISE, CONCEPT AND HOOK

Class discussion of genre scripts. Conceiving and writing premises, understanding and pitching concepts, and identifying story "hooks." Working with IP (intellectual property).

Assignment 5: Choose 3 pieces of IP and write no less than half a page about why each one could be a jumping off point for a film adaptation. Be prepared to pitch 1 of them in class (pitch should not exceed 5 minutes). *Due Monday, October 11 by 11:30pm*

Week 6 – October 13 – GIVING NOTES AND SCRIPT ANALYSIS

5 minute IP pitch. Understanding how to give notes. Script analysis and coverage. The language of development

Assignment 6: Give creative producer notes on 1 script. No less than three pages. Instructor will share a list to choose from. *Due Monday, October 18 by 11:30pm*

Week 7 – October 20 - GUEST SPEAKER

Class discussion of creative producer notes. Guest speaker.

Reading: Choose two recent original spec scripts to read. Instructor will provide a list.

Week 8 – October 27 – GUEST SPEAKER

Class discussion of spec script reading. Guest speaker.

Happy Halloween!

Week 9 – November 3 – THE WORLD OF DEVELOPMENT

Class discussion of guest speakers. The role that agents, managers, studio execs, and creative play in feature development. How to make a writer's list and a director's list.

Assignment 7: Identify 2 production companies you like/admire and read one script from each one that is in development. For each script, make a director's list of at least ten names and a cast list of at least five names for 2-3 of the main characters. *Due Monday, November 1 by 11:30pm*

Week 10 – November 10 – PACKAGING YOUR IDEA FOR DEVELOPMENT

An overview of everything we've discussed. Details of how to put together your final assignment.

Week 11 – November 17

NO CLASS.
FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE Friday, November 19 by 11:30pm.

➔ **Course / School Policies**

Attendance: Classroom attendance is MANDATORY. More than one "excused" absence will result in a lowering of grade per each absence.

Deadlines: Strict Adherence to deadlines is expected. Materials presented or posted late will result in a negative grade for the particular assignment.

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.

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 undisruptive 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.

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 two weeks. Students do not receive reminders once they complete the evaluation. Students complete the evaluation online at https://mycti.cti.depaul.edu/mycti

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 CampusConnect is correct.

Academic Integrity Policy - This course will be subject to the academic integrity policy passed by faculty. More information can be found athttp://academicintegrity.depaul.edu/

Plagiarism - 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.

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: Student Center, LPC, Suite #370 Phone number: (773)325.1677 Fax: (773)325.3720 TTY: (773)325.7296

Preferred Name & Gender Pronouns - Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the quarter so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. Please also note that students may choose to identify within the University community with a preferred first name that differs from their legal name and may also update their gender. The preferred first name will appear in University related systems and documents except where the use of the legal name is necessitated or required by University business or legal need. For more information and instructions on how to do so, please see the Student Preferred Name and Gender Policy at http://policies.depaul.edu/policy/policy.aspx?pid=332

COVID-19 Health and Safety Precautions

Keeping our DePaul community safe is of utmost importance in the pandemic. Students, faculty and staff are expected to (1) wear a mask as required at all times while indoors on campus; (2) refrain from eating and drinking in classrooms; (3) keep current with their COVID-19 vaccinations or exemptions; (4) stay home if sick; (5) participate in any required COVID-19 testing; (6) complete the online Health and Safety Guidelines for Returning to Campus training; and (7) abide by the City of Chicago Emergency Travel Advisory. By doing these things, we are Taking Care of DePaul, Together. The recommendations may change as local, state, and federal guidelines evolve. Students who do not abide by the mask requirement may be subject to the student conduct process and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office. Students who have a medical reason for not complying with any requirements should register with DePaul's Center for Student with Disabilities (CSD).