

Loyola University Chicago
COMM 326 Screenwriting: Spring 2018
School of Communication: Room 003
Wednesdays 415pm-645pm.

Instructor: Terrance T. Brown

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Please allow 24 hours for a response to your question. Any emails received over a weekend or holiday will be answered the next weekday. Please use your @luc.edu account when sending email inquiries. Office hours are still being determined. Until they are finalized, please make an appointment by email should you need to speak with the instructor.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course introduces students to the process and practice of writing for the screen. Through exercises and analysis of structure and storytelling fundamentals, students will develop a working sense of the art of crafting a screenplay, learning how to build a script from an original and compelling idea. Extensive writing requirements cover all aspects of screenwriting, from writing action and dialogue to scene construction and sequencing, culminating in the development of a complete first draft of a feature-length screenplay (80-110 pages).

REQUIRED TEXTS: Students will be required to read and analyze an assigned feature screenplay each week for discussion. Students will also be required to view and analyze one film per week. The assigned film list will be prompted by the instructor and generated through class discussion. All prompts and examples required for homework assignments will be provided (digital and/or hardcopy).

REQUIRED SOFTWARE:

- Adobe Acrobat: You will submit all assignments as PDFs. No Word docs or other files
- FREE screenplay formatting software (sign up using your @luc.edu email)
- Final Draft Trial (18 weeks free): <http://bit.ly/trialfinaldraft>
- Adobe Story Free: <http://bit.ly/freadobestory>
- Whichever you choose, submit every assignment as a PDF. Note that early in the quarter, discovery assignments (synopses, loglines, etc.) won't require script formatting. These will be submitted in 12 pt. Courier, single-spaced.

GRADING & EVALUATION:

100-95 A 94-90 A- 89-87 B+
86-83 B 82-80 B- 79-77 C+
76-74 C 73-70 C- 69-67 D+
66-65 D Below 65 F

Final Grade Formula:

Weekly writing assignments:	20%	Script: Intro to Midpoint:	25%
In-class exercises/workshops:	10%	Script: Midpoint to Finale:	25%
Produced script reads/analysis:	10%	Produced film viewings/analysis:	10%

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: The focus of this course is on learning to develop strong storytelling instincts in order to efficiently craft a feature-length screenplay. Each student will complete written exercises designed to mimic the challenges of writing a feature-length screenplay and will grow their own unique concepts logline to script.

All assignments must be typed in 12 pt. Courier, single spaced, and emailed in a PDF by 5 pm the Monday before class (48 hrs.) to tbrown@luc.edu. Type your full name, assignment description (e.g. "logline") and due date at the top of the first page of your assignment. **** NOTE: Please always start your PDF filename with your LAST NAME. ****

DEADLINES: Students are expected to complete all of the assigned readings and writing projects on time. Late work not only holds you back, but holds the class back because of the collaborative nature of the course. Late work will be automatically penalized five points for each day past the original due date. Moreover, assignments will not be accepted more than five calendar days past due.

ATTENDANCE: This class meets once a week. Because of the sheer amount of material covered in each session, attendance is critical. Consequently, no absence will be excused unless it is because of the death of a loved one, or due to serious personal illness or injury. Each unexcused absence will reduce your final grade by 2.5 points. More than two excused absences will do the same. Note that any in-class work missed because of absence cannot be made up. Do not email the instructors asking for assignment details. It's your responsibility to obtain notes from classmates.

COMPUTER/PRINTER USE: Please be aware the occasional software bugs, viruses, human error and/or hardware failure can result in damaged, corrupted or deleted files. Therefore, it is your responsibility to routinely back up project files throughout your writing process and to deliver readable, uncorrupted files in the required PDF format. Computer failure is no excuse for lost work or late assignments.

The instructor reserves the right to revise or change anything in this syllabus.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY: Academic dishonesty can take several forms, including, but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, copying another student's work, and submitting false documents. Cheating includes:

- Obtaining, distributing or communicating examination materials prior to the scheduled examination without the consent of the instructor
- Providing information to another student during an examination
- Obtaining information from another student or any other person during an examination
- Using any material or equipment during an examination without consent of the instructor, or in a manner which is not authorized by the instructor
- Attempting to change answers after the examination has been submitted

- Unauthorized collaboration, or the use in whole or part of another student's work, on homework, lab reports, programming assignments, and any other course work which is completed outside of the classroom
- Falsifying medical or other documents to petition for excused absences or deadline extensions
- Any other action that, by omission or commission, compromises the integrity of the academic evaluation process.

All student work must be wholly original. Plagiarism is the appropriation of ideas, language, work, or intellectual property of another, either by intent or by negligence, without sufficient public acknowledgement and appropriate citation that the material is not one's own. It is true that every thought probably has been influenced to some degree by the thoughts and actions of others. Such influences can be thought of as affecting the ways we see things and express all thoughts. Plagiarism, however, involves the taking and use of specific words and ideas of others without proper acknowledgement of the sources, and includes, but is not limited to:

- Submitting as one's own material copied from a published source, such as Internet, print, CD-ROM, audio, video, etc
- Submitting as one's own another person's unpublished work or examination material.
- Allowing another or paying another to write or research a paper for one's own benefit.
- Purchasing, acquiring, and using for course credit a pre-written paper.

The above list is in no way intended to be exhaustive. Students should be guided by the principle that it is of utmost importance to give proper recognition to all sources. To do so is both an act of personal, professional courtesy and of intellectual honesty. Any failure to do so, whether by intent or by neglect, whether by omission or commission, is an act of plagiarism. Moreover, a student may not submit the same paper or other work from another class. This applies even if the student is enrolled in the classes during different semesters. If a student plans to submit work with similar or overlapping content for credit in two or more classes, the student should consult with all instructors prior to submission of the work to make certain that such submission will not violate this standard.

Plagiarism or any other act of academic dishonesty will result minimally in the assigning an "F" for the assignment or examination. The instructor may impose a more severe sanction, including a grade of "F" in the course. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate area head.

COMM 326 SCHEDULE: Spring 2018

(Subject to change. Updates to be posted.)

**NOTE: Email homework by 5PM on due date listed (48 hr. advance)*

<u>Class 1</u>	List: Wall of shame
January 17	Script: When Harry Met Sally
	Lecture/Workshop: Structure Theory/Film as journey
	Homework: 5 Original Loglines [Bring copies for the class]
	Due Monday 1/15

Class 2
January 24 List: All-time Favorite
Script: Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind
Lecture/Workshop: Loglines& Pitching/ Contract with the audience/reader
Exercise: Elevator Pitch
Homework: Choose/Re-write logline and write 3-page synopsis
Due Monday 1/22

Class 3
January 31 List: Childhood Favorite
Script: Toy Story
Lecture/Workshop: Formatting vs Style - Language of screenwriting
Exercise: Controlling action
Homework: Cause & Effect Outline
Due Monday 1/29

Class 4
February 7 List: Memorable Dialogue
Script: Moonlight
Lecture/Workshop: Constructing scenes - Act One/Catalyst
Homework: Write pages 1-10
Due Monday 2/5

Class 5
February 14 List: Genre
Script: Enough Said
Lecture/Workshop: Dialogue & Genre
Homework: Write pages 11-20
Due Monday 2/12

Class 6
February 21 List: Memorable Ensemble
Script: Bridesmaids
Lecture/Workshop: POV Character/Scene Development/Sequencing
Exercise: Rashomon writing
Homework: Write pages 21-30
Due Monday 2/19

Class 7
February 28 List: Non-American
Script: Shame
Lecture/Workshop: Note taking/giving & Troubleshooting your process
Homework: Write pages 31-40
Due Monday 2/26

*****SPRING BREAK - No Class 3/7*****

Class 8
March 14 List: Animation
Script: Fruitvale Station
Lecture/Workshop: Approaching midpoint/Workshop a pivotal scene
Homework: Write pages 41-50
Due Monday 3/12

Class 9
March 21 List: Guilty pleasure
Script: Beasts of The Southern Wild
Lecture/Workshop: Beyond the midpoint/Workshop a pivotal scene
Homework: Write pages 51-60

Due Monday 3/19

Class 10
March 28

List: Non-traditional
Script: The Shape of Water
Lecture/Workshop: Momentum & Earning Act Three
Homework: Write pages 61-70

Due Monday 3/28

Class 11
April 4

List: Adaptation
Script: Juno
Lecture/Workshop: Collaboration and punch-ups
Homework: Write pages 71-80

Due Monday 4/2

Class 12
April 11

List: Best of the rest
Script: Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
Lecture/Workshop: The business of screenwriting
Homework: Write pages 81-Finale

Due Monday 4/9

Class 13
April 18

Lecture/Workshop: Workshop a sequence (6 pages)
Homework: Last chance for missing pages

Due Monday 4/16

Class 14
April 25

Last class. There is no final exam for COMM 326 Screenwriting

Lecture/Workshop: Workshop a sequence (6 pages)