

ENG 79A: DIRECTED WRITING: BEGINNING SCREENPLAY
Summer 2009
Classroom: Olin-Sang 124
M, T, Th 1:45 – 4:15 PM
Instructor: Marc Weinberg
Office: Rabb 226
marceweinberg@hotmail.com

Screenplay sites: Drew's Script-O-Rama
script-o-rama.com/snazzy/dircut.html

REQUIRED TEXT: Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting by Syd Field

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide you with the tools necessary to tell a story, and get you started on your screenplay.

COURSE DESIGN

This class is both workshop and lecture. You will read scripts, discuss films, and write frequently. These assignments will be reviewed in class, meaning you will receive criticism of your work, and critique classmates' work.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- All work must be typed and include a cover page with your name, date and assignment.
- All work must be proofread for grammar, spelling errors and typos.
- You must keep up with all readings, as well as watch assigned movies.

GRADING

Participation in class will account for 20% of your grade. The rest of your grade will be determined by the following assignments:

1. Two homework assignments (20% of your grade).
2. Quiz (10% of your grade).
3. A beat outline, containing your script's most important scenes (10% of your grade).
4. The first act of your feature script (40% of your grade).

DAY 1 (MONDAY, 6/1/09)

- Introduction
- In-class assignment

TUESDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Read Screenplay Format and How To Pitch Your

Ideas

DAY 2 (TUESDAY, 6/2/09)

- Discussion of Screenplay Form
- In-class assignment
- Discussion of the important rules of scriptwriting, including format

*THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Read Field, Introduction & Chapters 1 & 2
See "The School Of Rock"
Pitch two ideas for a screenplay.*

DAY 3 (THURSDAY, 6/4/09)

- Discuss "School Of Rock"
- Discussion of subject and structure
- Pitch your ideas to the class. Class picks one idea.
- In-class assignment

*MONDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Read Field, Chapters 3, 4 & 13
Read and see "Capote"
Bring in 2 favorite movies on DVD; we'll look at the openings*

DAY 4 (MONDAY, 6/8/09)

- Discuss film and script of "Capote"
- Discussion of form and character
- In-class assignment: View openings of movies

*TUESDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Read Field, Chapters 5 & 6
Identify and discuss your script's act breaks, midpoint, and climax.*

DAY 5 (TUESDAY, 6/9/09)

- Discussion of Story & Character, and Beginnings and Endings & Setups
- Students will discuss their act breaks with the class

*THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: See "Groundhog Day"
Email the first scene of your script (2 to 3 pages) to yourself.*

DAY 6 (THURSDAY, 6/11/09)

- Discuss film and script of "Groundhog Day"
- Discuss first scenes

*MONDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Read Field, Chapter 7
Read and see "Searching For Bobby Fischer"
Email 12-beat outline to yourself.*

DAY 7 (MONDAY, 6/15/09)

- Discuss "Searching For Bobby Fischer"
- Discuss Setting Up The Story
- Discuss extended outlines.

*TUESDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Read sample silent movie
Graded Assignment #1*

DAY 8 (TUESDAY, 6/16/09)

- Turn in first graded assignment

*THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Read Field, Chapters 8 & 9
See "The Corpse Bride."*

DAY 9 (THURSDAY, 6/18/09)

- Discuss "The Corpse Bride."
- Discuss Two Incidents and Plot Points
- In-class assignment.

*ASSIGNMENT DUE FRIDAY: Graded Assignment #2 - Email the first 10 pages
of your script to the entire class*

*MONDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: See "V For Vendetta"
Read classmates' pages and write notes.
Read Field, Chapters 10 & 11*

*ASSIGNMENT DUE IN 3 WEEKS: Completed first act and outlines, containing
45 scenes.*

DAY 10 (MONDAY, 6/22/09)

- Discuss "V For Vendetta"
- Discuss Scene and Sequence
- Discuss classmates' pages.

TUESDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Email 24 beat outline to class.

DAY 11 (TUESDAY, 6/23/09)

- Discuss Building The Storyline

*THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Read Field, Chapter 12
Read outlines and be prepared to discuss*

DAY 12 (THURSDAY, 6/25/09)

- Discuss outlines
- Discuss Chapter 12

ASSIGNMENT DUE FRIDAY: Email up to 10 more pages of your script to the entire class, for discussion on Monday.

*MONDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Read Field, Chapters 14 & 15
See "Thank You For Smoking"
Read classmates' pages and write notes.*

ASSIGNMENT DUE IN 2 WEEKS: Completed first act and outlines, containing 45 scenes.

DAY 13 (MONDAY, 6/29/09)

- Discuss Writing the Screenplay & Adaptation
- Discuss "Thank You For Smoking"
- Discuss second set of pages.

TUESDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Read Field, Chapters 16 & 17

DAY 14 (TUESDAY, 6/30/09)

- Discuss Collaboration and After It's Written
- In-class assignment

THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT: Prepare for quiz.

DAY 15 (THURSDAY, 7/2/09)

- Quiz
- Summary

FINAL ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, 7/6/09: Completed first act and outlines, containing 40-45 scenes, to the Brandeis English Department (Rabb 144) by 12 noon. If you would like notes on your pages, please include a self-addressed stamped (with at least \$2.50 in postage) 9x12 envelope. Please do not include money in place of stamps.

If you would prefer, you may also email your work to me (marceweinberg@hotmail.com) on 7/11, but you will not receive notes.