

ENG 79A: DIRECT WRITING: BEGINNING SCREENPLAY

Summer I 2018

MT&TH 1:30 PM-3:50 PM

Instructor: Marc Weinberg

Office Hours: Rabb 226, Mondays 12:30-1:30 PM (by appointment)

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script-o-rama.com/snazzy/dircut.html & simplyscripts.com

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.
- Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed one unexcused absence. **Two unexcused absences will result in no credit for the course.**
- If you come to class more than ten minutes late, you will be considered tardy; two tardies count as one unexcused absence.
- All work must be proofread for proper formatting, grammar, spelling errors, and typos. Your work will be graded down for mistakes.
- You must keep up with all readings, as well as watch assigned movies.

TEXT AND OTHER MATERIALS

- Required Text: *Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting*, by Syd Field

GRADING

Your grade will be determined by the following:

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

Assignments are expected on time. Late submissions will not be accepted more than two days late. **To prevent lost pages and avoid late submissions, please email your work to yourself after finishing your pages on any given day. Computer malfunction is NOT an excuse for late submission**

CELL PHONES & TEXT MESSAGING

Please turn them off before entering the classroom. If I catch you text messaging or surfing the web during class, I may ask you to leave – and it will count as an unexcused absence.

PLEASE NOTE: There may be changes to the syllabus. Please review the assignment emails for the latest update.

DAY 1 (MONDAY, 6/4/18)

Introduction

TUESDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- See "The School of Rock"

DAY 2 (TUESDAY, 6/5/18)

Discuss "The School of Rock".

THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- Read *Field*, Introduction & Chapters 1 & 2.
- Read "How To Pitch"
- Pitch 2 ideas to the class.

DAY 3 (THURSDAY, 6/7/18)

Pitch two ideas to class.

Discuss Chapters 1 & 2.

MONDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- Read "Screenplay Format" and "Important Screenplay Rules."
- Identify and discuss your script's first scene, inciting event, act breaks, and climax.
- Save "Lady Bird" to your desktop and **bring your computer to class.**

DAY 4 (MONDAY, 6/11/18)

Students will discuss their first scenes, inciting event, act breaks, midpoint, climax, and resolution with the class

Discuss "Lady Bird"

Discuss Screenplay Format and Important Screenplay Rules.

TUESDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- Read *Field*, Chapters 6 & 7.
- Complete first scene assignment.

DAY 5 (TUESDAY, 6/12/18)

Discuss Chapters 6 & 7.

First scene lecture.

THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- Complete your first scene.
- Read *Field*, Chapters 3, 4, & 5.
- Read and see "Black Swan."

DAY 6 (THURSDAY, 6/14/18)

Read and discuss first scenes.

Discuss Character
Discuss "Black Swan."
Expand your outline.

MONDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- *Expand your outline to 20 scenes and email to me prior to class*
- *Read Field, Chapters 8 & 9.*

THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- *Email the first 10 pages of your script in PDF format to me by the start of Thursday's class, for in-class read and discussion.*

DAY 7 (MONDAY, 6/18/18)

Discuss Two Incidents and Plot Points.

TUESDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- *Finish your silent movie and email to me prior to the start of Tuesday's class, for in-class read and discussion.*

THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- *Email the first 10 pages of your script in PDF format to me by the start of Thursday's class, for in-class read and discussion.*

DAY 8 (TUESDAY, 6/19/18)

Work on first 10 pages.

THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- *Email the first 10 pages of your script in PDF format to me by the start of Thursday's class, for in-class read and discussion.*
- *Read Chapters 10, 11, & 12.*
- *View "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind."*

DAY 9 (THURSDAY, 6/21/18)

Read and discuss the first ten pages
Discuss "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind."

MONDAY'S ASSIGNMENT:

- *Email your second set of pages (at least five new pages) in PDF format to me by the start of Monday's class, for in-class read and discussion.*
- *View "Get Out."*
- *Read Chapters 14-17.*

DAY 10 (MONDAY, 6/25/18)

Read and discuss your second set of pages.
Discuss "Get Out."

THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT (6/28):

- *Email your revised pages in PDF format to me by the start of Thursday's class, for in-class read and discussion.*

DAY 11 (TUESDAY, 6/26/18)

Movie Day!

THURSDAY'S ASSIGNMENT (6/28):

- *Email your second set of pages (at least five new pages) in PDF format to yourself by the start of Monday's class, for in-class read and discussion.*

DAY 12 (THURSDAY, 6/28/18)

Read and discuss your second set of pages.

NEXT WEEK'S ASSIGNMENT (MONDAY, 7/2):

- *Final Quiz.*

NEXT WEEK'S ASSIGNMENT (TUESDAY, 7/3):

- *If you wish to receive notes, your completed first act and outlines, containing 35-40 scenes. You must include a self-addressed 10x13 priority stamped envelope.*

DAY 13 (MONDAY, 7/2/18)

Final Quiz.

DAY 14 (TUESDAY, 7/3/18)

ASSIGNMENT DUE AT THE START OF CLASS: Printed complete first act and 8-10 page outlines, containing 35-40 scenes. *If you would like notes on your pages, you must include a self-addressed STAMPED (with at least \$3.00 in postage) 10x13 envelope. PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT CASH IN LIEU OF STAMPS.*

ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, 7/9:

- **IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO RECEIVE NOTES ON YOUR PAGES, you may email them to me at marcw@brandeis.edu by no later than noon MONDAY, 7/9. **IF I DO NOT RECEIVE YOUR COMPLETE ASSIGNMENT BY THEN, YOUR WORK IS LATE. YOU MUST BE AVAILABLE BY PHONE AND EMAIL FOR 48 HOURS AFTER SUBMITTING YOUR WORK SO I CAN CONTACT YOU IN THE EVENT I DON'T RECEIVE YOUR EMAIL OR CAN'T OPEN YOUR FILES. IF I AM UNABLE TO READ YOUR WORK AND CANNOT REACH YOU, YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR YOUR FINAL ASSIGNMENT AND MAY NOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THE COURSE.****