

CTWR 417: Story Analysis: Writing Coverage for Hollywood
19195R 2 Units
Fall 2018
SCA 203

Peter Exline
exline@usc.edu

Contact info: Email exline@usc.edu
Day: Monday 10AM-12:50PM
Room: SCA 203

Office hours 4PM on Monday, or after class. Please email to make an appointment by preceding Friday afternoon.

No one can use laptop computers or cell phones during class time.

Do not copy a script synopsis from the internet for any assignment. These differ from the materials used in class and students will receive an “F” for the assignment.

COURSE GOALS:

1. Students will learn to critically evaluate feature length screenplay with an eye toward balanced criticism.
2. The class will focus on the essentials to dramatic writing, the creation of conflict thru a central character who wants something badly and is having trouble getting it.
3. Students will synopsisize and criticize five screenplays.
4. The class will follow the steps to adapting a novel into screenplay, then seeing the film and discerning the choices made and the recognizable differences in three versions of the same story.
5. Each student will write a set of notes describing one possible direction for a rewrite of a screenplay applying the ideas discussed in class. A “working construct” of the movie will show many differences in the process.

COURSE OBJECTIVE: Students will learn to constructively analyze a novel or a screenplay with an eye toward balanced criticism.

REQUIRED READING

1. “The Player “ a novel by Michael Tolkin
2. The CTWR 417 Course Reader which contains 5 Screenplays

GRADING

Class Participation-----10 per cent

If you don't attend class, you can't participate. Excessive absences and lateness can lead to a lower grade, as much as a ten per cent reduction in grade for two absences. More than three absences can lead to failing the class. The only excuse for missing a class is medical documentation.

Homework-----40 per cent

Each homework assignment constitutes 8% of the student's final grade. Late papers will result in lowering the grade by at least one point for each day. A to B for one day, B to C for two days.

Students will receive mid term grades in class on October 2.

Final Paper-----50 percent

As per Writing Division policy the following is a breakdown of numeric grade to letter grade:

A	100% to 94%	C	76% to 73%
A-	93% to 90%	C-	72% to 70%
B+	89% to 87%	D+	69% to 67%
B	86% to 83%	D	66% to 63%
B-	82% to 80%	D-	62% to 60%
C+	79% to 77%	F	59% to 0%

WRITING DIVISION ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Two unexcused absences will result in your grade being lowered by one full point (ex: A to a (A-)). A third unexcused absence will result in your grade being lowered another full point (ex: B to a (B-)). Your grade will be lowered by one point for every absence after. Two late arrivals equate to one full absence.

In order for absence to be excused the student must have approval from the professor and provide documentation at the next attended class session.

Please note that if you are a Writing for Screen and Television major/minor you must receive a grade of a C or better in order to receive degree credit. If you have any questions about the minimum grade required for credit please check with your home department. If you have an emergency and must miss class please contact your professor prior to class or contact the Writing Division at 213-740-3303.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- Aug. 20 What a Story Analyst Does:
Forms of Coverage, Genre Lists, Glossary
Assignment-----Read "Tootsie" and write coverage using Mandalay format.
- Aug. 27 What a Story Analyst Sees: The Three-Act Structure
Assignment-----"Tootsie" Coverage Due
Start Reading "The Player" (Novel) by Michael Tolkin and write coverage using
Mandalay format. Look for six problems in the novel.
- Sept. 3 No Class: Labor Day
- Sept. 10 The Set-Up: What it's About, Who it's About, What's the Problem?
Screenings of various openings from movies.
- Sept. 17 Deconstructing "The Player" and analyzing story problems. Good things/
bad things. The elements of narrative.
Assignment-----"The Player" (Novel) Coverage Due
Start Reading "The Player" (SP) by Michael Tolkin and write
Coverage with Mandalay format. Find 6 problems with the screenplay.
- Sept. 24 The Novel Into Screenplay: Transformation from
Internal Monologue to External Conflict, Action, Dialogue
- Oct. 1 Making it Better: Ideas for a rewrite.
Assignment-----MIDTERM "The Player" screenplay due.
Assignment-----Begin reading "The Fugitive" by David Twohy (MGM
Format) Look for six problems in the screenplay.
- Oct. 8 Screening "The Player"
Mid-Term Conferences
- Oct. 15 Deconstructing "The Fugitive" and analyzing story problems,
genre considerations, as well as character motives.
Conflict: Who wants what and why.
Screening "Naked Hollywood" documentary
Assignment-----"The Fugitive" coverage due, MGM Format

CTWR 417 Syllabus Page 4

- Oct. 22 “The Fugitive”: Questions To Answer: Who wants to kill Helen Kimble?
 Class discussion: One possible re-write for “The Fugitive”
Begin Prepping Development Notes for “The Fugitive.” (Stone Group Pictures
format)
- Oct. 29 Screening: “The Fugitive” assembly
Assignment----- Development Notes on “The Fugitive” due
Begin Reading “Mother’s Day” (MGM Format)
- Nov. 5 The Three-Act Structure: How It Works
Screening: Various act breaks in different movies.
- Nov. 12 The Episodic Screenplay: When cleverness works best
Assignment-----“Mother’s Day” Coverage Due:
Begin Reading Final Screenplay (MGM Format)
- Nov. 19 Television: Different Medium/Different Problems
Working in Hollywood:
- Nov. 26 FINAL SCREENPLAY COVERAGE DUE (MGM Format)
Guest Speaker

STATEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH ACADEMIC DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Website and contact information for DSP: http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html, (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), (213) 740-8216 (FAX) ability@usc.edu.

STATEMENTS ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *SCampus*, the Student Guidebook, (www.usc.edu/scampus or <http://scampus.usc.edu>) contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>. Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: <http://usc.edu/academe/acsen/issues/ipr/index.html>.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/ COURSE CONTINUITY IN A CRISIS

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

Please activate your course in Blackboard with access to the course syllabus. Whether or not you use Blackboard regularly, these preparations will be crucial in an emergency. USC's Blackboard learning management system and support information is available at blackboard.usc.edu.

DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.