

**School of Cinematic Arts  
The John Wells Division of  
Writing for Screen and Television**

**CTWR 206B : WRITING THE SCREENPLAY  
Section 19156**

Instructor: BOB TZUDIKER  
Class Schedule: THURSDAY/ 10am - 12:50pm  
Class Location: SCA 342  
Office Hours: By appointment at USC or by phone  
Contact Information: Email: tzudiker@usc.edu; Phone: 323-969-1981

**Course Objective:**

Our objective is to write a feature film draft and rewrite that will make you proud.

**Course Description:**

This is a workshop in which we will learn as much from each other as from individual work. Discussion of each other's work is a vital part of class, so part of your homework each week will be reading each other's outlines and treatments. Preparation is essential to productive class time.

You will turn your outlines from 206a into a film script. We will also pay attention to our internal processes as you write.

**Course Reading:**

"The War of Art" by Steven Pressfield

WRITE!: FIND THE TRUTH IN YOUR FICTION" by Gerald DiPego

Reread article from The Guardian 3/4/17 by George Saunders:

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/mar/04/what-writers-really-do-when-they-write>

**Grading Criteria:**

Students will present their work in class or email written work no later than 6pm on each Tuesday. This allows time for professor and classmates to read the work before the classes on Thursdays. Late work will be penalized in grading.

Participation:	10%
Weekly assignments	65%
First Draft	15%
Polish	10%
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	100%

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%

### **Expectation of Professionalism:**

We will be using the web app <https://zoodiker.com/> to submit and view each others work, which will be explained in the first class. All material is expected to be turned in on time and in the proper format. Outlines and treatments should be submitted as PDFs on <https://zoodiker.com> and in PDF or FDX (Final Draft) format for script pages. A backup submission should be made via email in case of technical problems.

Assignments may be penalized for grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, format mistakes, and typos. We have an expectation of professionalism, and such errors are distracting to the reader. Please proof your assignment prior to submission. Spell check is the first step, but will not catch all errors. The best proofreading is to read your work aloud, even to yourself.

### **Writing Division Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected 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 equates 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.

### **Laptop and Cell Phone Policy:**

Students should bring a laptop (if available) to class for work on in-class exercises. No web surfing, checking email or texts during class unless specifically asked to do so. Legible printing on a lined pad is acceptable for in-class work. Laptops will be opened only for specific in-class purposes. Cell phones should be off or silenced and kept out of sight during class time unless specifically cleared by the professor prior to class.

### **Class Schedule:**

Please note that all dates, assignments and subjects are subject to change at the discretion of the professor. It may be necessary to split the class into two groups in order to have time for full discussion of all stories.

YOU ARE EXPECTED TO READ EACH OTHERS' MATERIAL FOR EVERY CLASS.

**Week 1 - 1/10:** Refresh Ideas

ASSIGNMENT PRIOR TO THIS CLASS: Read this Syllabus AND be ready to present your idea to the class to refresh our memories and catch up on any changes. The presentation should be brief and include any pressing questions you may have.

Presentation/questions constitute half of Participation grade (5% of total grade – the other 5% depends on class participation).

ASSIGNMENT: Start writing approx. 10 pages each week

**Week 2 – 1/17:** Discuss Group A pages.

REREAD "What Writers Really Do..." article from The Guardian 3/4/17 by George Saunders.

A GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)

ASSIGNMENT: Keep writing approx. 10 pages

**Week 3 – 1/24:** Discuss Group B pages

Dreaming your story: harnessing your unconscious. Blocks to creativity.

B GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)

ASSIGNMENT: Read "The War of Art" by Pressfield

Keep writing. approx. 10 pages

**Week 4 – 1/31:** Discuss Group A pages

"Who?" How character becomes story. Capturing a character with brevity. We will look at song lyrics and other examples to show how concisely this can be done.

A GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)

ASSIGNMENT: approx. 10 pages, Read Chapter 1 of DiPego book

**Week 5 – 2/7:** Discuss Group B pages

The questions we ask ourselves create the world. Control the questions the audience is asking themselves from scene to scene.

B GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)

**Week 6 – 2/14:** Discuss Group A pages

The presence of the past: back story for plot and character.

A GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)

ASSIGNMENT: approx. 10 pages

**Week 7 – 2/21:** Discuss Group B pages

Imagery and repetition.

B GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)

ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages

**Week 8 – 2/28:** Discuss Group A pages  
Character character character.  
A GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)  
ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages

**Week 9 – 3/7:** Discuss Group B pages  
Creating a world.  
B GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)  
ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages

SPRING BREAK

**Week 10 – 3/21:** Discuss Group A pages  
A GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)  
ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages

**Week 11 – 3/28:** Discuss Group B pages  
Discuss our experiences in doing this classwork, what flows easily and what has been difficult.  
B GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)  
ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages

**Week 12 – 4/4:** Discuss Group A pages  
A GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)  
ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages

**Week 13 – 4/11:** Discuss Group B pages  
B GROUP DELIVER: Approx. 20 pages (10% of grade)  
ASSIGNMENT: Complete your first draft.

**Week 14 – 4/18:** Final script discussions and review.  
A & B GROUPS DELIVER: Final pages of first draft  
Your first draft should be finished by now, valued at an additional 20% of your grade)  
ASSIGNMENT: Begin rewrite.

**Week 15 – 4/25:** LAST CLASS. Review and discuss the class.  
DELIVER: Approx. half the rewrite (5% of grade)  
ASSIGNMENT: Continue rewrite

**Finals Week - :** Deliver final screenplay.  
Final script pages constitute 5% of grade

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

#### **Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See

additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

**Support Systems:**

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. <http://dsp.usc.edu>

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, <http://emergency.usc.edu>

*USC Department of Public Safety – 213-740-4321 (UPC) and 323-442-1000 (HSC) for 24-hour emergency assistance or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. <http://dps.usc.edu>

**PLEASE NOTE:**

**FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY  
INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX**