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

CTWR 415A "Advanced Writing"
Fall 2019

Instructor: ALEXA ALEMANNI
Class Schedule: Thursday 4 - 6:50pm
Class Location: SCA 342
Office Hours: By appointment only
Contact Information: alemanni@usc.edu

Course Objective:
The objective of this course is to learn how to break a story, develop an idea and craft that idea into three act structure and eventually a full outline. It teaches a professional approach to screenwriting that will develop good writing habits and a sharpened creative voice.

Course Description:
Students will go through a step by step process to build their story: logline, summary, character arcs, beat sheet and outline. All assignments will be discussed aloud in class with constructive discussions to follow.

Course Reading:
Readings and screenplays will be provided throughout the class.

Grading Criteria:
All written assignments must be turned in on Blackboard as a PDF and emailed to your classmates as a PDF no later than 11:59pm on Tuesdays.

Because this is a workshop students must provide constructive feedback to one another, and participate in class discussions.

All class work must be based on new, original ideas and completed on your own. No previously written scripts or treatments may be used.

Your final grade will be based on your written work as well as your attendance, and contribution to the workshop environment.

Grading Breakdown:

Participation: 15%
Written Assignments: 35%
Beat Sheet: 15%
Final Outline: 35%

                              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:
All material is expected to be turned in on time and in the proper format. Assignments will be penalized for grammatical mistakes, spelling errors, format mistakes, and typos. Please proof your assignment prior to submission.

Internet Policy:
Material discussed in the room is considered private and should not be blogged, tweeted, posted, snapchatted, or be posted anywhere else on the internet.

Recording Devices:
You may not record lectures or workshops without the consent of the instructor.

Laptop and Cell Phone Policy:
Laptops are permissible for taking notes. No cell phones.

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 5%. Your grade will be lowered by 5% 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.

Class Schedule:
Please note that all dates are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

Week 1, August 29th: Course Overview / Story Generation

Details:
* Go over the syllabus, talk about writing practices and workshop guidelines.
* Discuss loglines, story generation, and thematic POVs.
* Exercises to generate loglines

READING ASSIGNMENT:
* Read Chapter 1 of Vogler (provided)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT #1:
* Write three loglines for three different ideas. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

Week 2, September 5th: Three Act Structure / Workshop

Details:
* Workshop and narrow down your loglines
* Discuss Vogler / Three Act Structure & Journey sentences (Pixar and more)

READING ASSIGNMENT:
* Read Pixar's 22 rules of story (Provided)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT #2:
* Write a summary for the idea you've chosen using any of the templates provide in class. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

Week 3, September 12th: Character Development / Workshop

Details:
* Workshop three act summary
* Discuss reading
* Discuss character development, thematic resolution, wants/needs, character circles

READING ASSIGNMENT:
* Read up until the Inciting Incident/Catalyst of *The Devil Wars Prada* & *The Graduate* (provided)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT #3:
* Character wheel for your project and 2 Character POV summaries as discussed in class. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

Week 4, September 19th: Structure & Sequences / Workshop

Details:
* Workshop wheels and POV summaries
* Discuss reading
* Discuss structure and sequences

READING ASSIGNMENT:
* Read *Erin Brockovich* (provided)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT: BEAT SHEET
* Complete a beat sheet for your project. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

Week 5, September 26th: Act Ones / Workshop

Details:
* Workshop beat sheet
* Discuss and watch several Act ones. Break up into groups A & B.

READING ASSIGNMENT:
* Read & watch *Lost in Translation* (provided)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #4A:
* Both groups begin writing Act one of their outline. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

WEEK 6, October 3rd: Visual Storytelling / Workshop

Details:
* Group A workshops their Act One outline.
* Discuss *Lost in Translation*, and visual storytelling techniques

READING ASSIGNMENT:
* Read *Jerry Maguire* (provided)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #4B:
* Group A revises their Act One outline, Group B prepares to workshop their Act One outline. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

WEEK 7, October 10th: Subplots / Workshop

Details:
* Group B workshops their Act One outline.
* Discuss subplots

READING ASSIGNMENT:
* Read *Get Out* (provided)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #5A:
* Group B revises their Act One outline, Group A works on their Act Two outline. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

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WEEK 8, October 24th: Act Two difficulties / Workshop

Details:
* Group A workshops their First Half of Act Two outline.
* Discuss act two difficulties, watch and discuss examples, discuss King's Speech

READING ASSIGNMENT:
* Read *The Big Sick* (provided)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #5B:
* Group A revises their first half of Act Two outline, Group B works on their first half of Act Two outline. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

WEEK 9, October 31st: Act Two difficulties / Workshop

Details:
* Group B workshops their first half of Act Two outline.
* Discuss second half of Act Two, building new tension, is the story working?

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #6A:
* Group B revises the first half of their Act Two outline, Group A works on their second half of Act Two outline. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

WEEK 10, November 7th: Act Three / Workshop

Details:
* Group A workshops their second half of Act Two outline.
* Discuss Act Three, satisfying endings, tying up plot lines, resolving conflict, protagonist growth/change

READING ASSIGNMENT:
* Read one screenplay of your choice in your genre.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #6B:
* Group B works on their second half of Act Two outline, Group A revises their second half of Act Two outline. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

Week 11, November 14th: Voice / Workshop

Details:
* Group B workshops their second half of Act Two Outline
* Discuss voice of the screenwriter on the page, discuss endings, discuss the screenplays you read.

READING ASSIGNMENT:
* Read either *Juno* or *Social Network* (provided)

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #7A:
* Group B revises their second half of act Two Outline, group A works on their Act Three outline. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

Week 12, November 21st: Practice & Methodology / Workshop

Details:
* Group A workshops their Act Three outline.

* Discuss practice & methodology, discipline, writing systems, habits and more, discuss writers voice in Juno and Social Network.

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #7B:
* Group B workshops their Act Three outline. Assignment pages must be posted on blackboard & emailed to everyone by 11:59pm on Tuesday.

**THANKSGIVING BREAK **

Week 13, December 5th: Dialogue / Executing on the Page / Workshop

Details:
* Group B workshop their Act Three outline.
* Discuss dialogue tips, executing on the page

WRITING ASSIGNMENT: FINAL OUTLINE
* Group A & B revise their final outlines, DUE ON DECEMBER 11TH.

FINAL OUTLINES DUE ON: DECEMBER 11th VIA EMAIL IN PDF FORMAT.

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" 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, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

Student Health Leave Coordinator – 213-821-4710
Located in the USC Support and Advocacy office, the Health Leave Coordinator processes requests for health leaves of absence and advocates for students taking such leaves when needed.
https://policy.usc.edu/student-health-leave-absence/

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Writing Division: Curriculum: Syllabus: CTWR 415A "Advanced Writing"

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086
equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421
studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776
dsp.usc.edu
Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710
studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.
Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101
diversity.usc.edu
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Diversity and Inclusion
Diversity and Inclusion are foundational to the SCA community. We are committed to fostering a welcoming and supportive environment where students of all identities and backgrounds can flourish. The classroom should be a space for open discussion of ideas and self- expression; however, SCA will not tolerate verbal or written abuse, threats, harassment, intimidation or violence against person or property. If students are concerned about these matters in the classroom setting they are encouraged to contact their SCA Diversity and Inclusion Liaison, http://cinema.usc.edu/about/diversity.cfm; e-mail diversity@cinema.usc.edu. You can also report discrimination based on a protected class here https://equity.usc.edu/harassment-or-discrimination/

Disruptive Student Behavior:
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

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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.

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