

**CTWR 515B**  
**Practicum in Screenwriting**  
**Spring 2020**

Instructor: Professor Mary Sweeney  
Class Schedule: Thursday, 1:00 – 3:50 PM  
Location: SCA 342  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Email: msweeney@usc.edu

COURSE GOALS:

The work of this semester is to rewrite and polish the first draft of your Thesis screenplay, for delivery on Monday, April 8, 2019. Each class meeting will be conducted as a writing workshop in which we'll discuss your Thesis Committee's notes, your rewrite strategy and the rewritten pages you deliver each week. Class discussion and timely delivery of assignments will be part of your grade criteria (see below.)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This semester will focus on the rewrite and polish of the first draft of your feature screenplays. Rewriting is beginning the process of refinement of the story, which will be completed only when the film is edited and mixed. We'll examine the arc of the characters' development and resolution, and the plot. We'll examine the continuity of time, place, tone and character and add detail to enrich them. We will copy edit. As in the first semester, we'll continue in our efforts to identify, cultivate and articulate your personal strengths, and your individual styles of writing, along with the technical aspects of rewriting and polishing.

WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

January 16: Class workshop reviewing full first drafts.  
Assignment: **Divide class into two groups for discussion in the weeks following Thesis Committee meetings.**

January 24: **NO THURSDAY CLASS THIS WEEK IN LIEU OF THESIS MEETING.**

- Friday, January 25:** Thesis Committee meetings/defense of your first draft  
Thesis screenplay.  
Assignment: Write up notes and strategy from committee meetings.
- January 30: Discuss Thesis Committee meetings and strategies for rewrite, Group 1.  
Assignment: Devise strategy for rewrite based on committee meetings and class workshop. Begin rewriting.
- February 6: Discuss Thesis Committee meetings and strategies for rewrite, Group 2.  
Assignment: Devise strategy for rewrite based on committee meetings and class notes. Begin rewriting.
- February 13: Discuss pages.  
Assignment: continue rewrite, 15-20 pages
- February 20: Discuss pages.  
Assignment: continue rewrite, 15-20 pages
- February 27: Discuss pages.  
Assignment: continue rewrite, 15-20 pages
- March 5: Discuss pages.  
Assignment: continue rewrite, 15-20 pages
- March 12: Discuss pages.  
Assignment: continue rewrite, 15-20 pages
- March 14-22:** **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS-**
- Assignment: **Class will divide into two groups. Group 1 delivers full drafts to instructor and class by March 19. Group 2 delivers full drafts by March 26.**
- March 26: Final discussion and notes on Group 1 final rewrite.
- April 2: Final discussion and notes on Group 2 final rewrite.
- April 6: **MONDAY: FINAL DRAFTS DUE.** paper copies are due in the writing division office on April 6 by 12PM (NOON). Please write the names of each thesis committee member on the title page. Please ask your committee members if they prefer a hard copy or digital file by email. If sending my email, notify the writing division office. **EXTENSIONS ARE NOT PERMITTED.**

- April 9: Review of Final Drafts by students.
- April 16: **NO CLASS THIS WEEK IN LIEU OF THESIS COMMITTEE MEETING.**
- Friday, April 17: Thesis Committee Day. Students will meet with their Thesis Committees to review their work and the direction of future revisions.
- April 23: Discuss committee meetings and screenplay strategy going forward.
- April 30: Exit interviews.
- Wednesday, May 6: *Rewrite of pending thesis rewrite due to instructor.*
- Monday, May 11: Thesis Instructors inform Writing Division of final decision on whether rewrites of pending decisions have passed or not.
- Friday May 15: Commencement.

#### CLASSROOM PROTOCOL:

The written assignments will be due by midnight Sunday previous to each class. This is a firm deadline and late delivery of assignments will impact your grade for the course. If you finish the work earlier, please send it in. You'll be expected come to class with notes on your colleagues' pages for class discussion.

NO OPEN LAPTOPS IN CLASS. Open laptops are allowed only for the person whose work is being discussed, for the purpose of taking notes.

Please remember to keep the tone of discussion collaborative, generous, and non-competitive. The safer everyone feels in discussion, the freer you'll be to explore and express your creative convictions.

#### RECOMMENDED READING

The Art Spirit, Robert Henri.

## RECOMMENDED SCREENING

The Browning Version; (1951, director Anthony Asquith, written by Terence Rattigan.)

Pygmalion; (1938, directed by Anthony Asquith, written in part by George Bernard Shaw, author of the play.)

Tokyo Story; (1953, directed and written by Yasujiro Ozu.)

The Apartment; (1960, Billy Wilder, written by Billy Wilder and I.A.L. Diamond.)

The Godfather, I; (1972, Director Francis Ford Coppola, written by Coppola and Mario Puzo.)

The Godfather, II (1974, directed and written by Francis Ford Coppola, Based on Mario Puzo's novel.)

Killer of Sheep, (1977, Written and directed by Charles Burnett.)

Mulholland Drive (2001, Directed and written by David Lynch.)

The Bourne Identity; (2002, director Doug Liman, written by Tony Gilroy and William Blake Herron.)

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly: 2007, 112 minutes. Directed by Julian Schnabel, Written by Ronald Harwood (screenplay) and Jean-Dominique Bauby (Book).

Baraboo: (2009, written and directed by Mary Sweeney.)

Sweetgrass: (2009 ethnographic film, directed by Lisa Barbash and Lucien Castaing-Taylor.)

Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives: (written and directed by Apichatpong Weerasethakul, inspired by the book written by Phra Sripariyattiweti.)

The Fighter: (2010, written by Scott Silver, Eric Johnson & Paul Tamasy, directed by David O. Russell.

Mad Max; Fury Road: (2015, written by George Miller, Brendan McCarthy & Nick Lathouris and directed by George Miller.

The Square: (2017, written and directed by Ruben Ostlund.)

## GRADING CRITERIA:

Class critique and discussion	10%
Weekly written assignments	50%
Final Draft:	40%

## Writing Division Attendance Policy:

Students are expected be on time and prepared for each class.

On the third absence, students will have their final grade lowered by 10% and an additional 10% for each absence thereafter. Two late arrivals equates to one full absence.

Note: This is a change in policy. Instructors will no longer distinguish between an excused or unexcused absence. An absence will be an absence.

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/or know you will miss class please contact your professor prior to class or contact the Writing Division at 213-740-3303.

If a student has an emergency and additional accommodations are needed, those accommodations will need to come through the USC Campus Support and Intervention (CSI) office. The Writing Division recommends the student and/or advocate contact CSI at 213-821-4710 and their home department adviser for additional support.

### 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 II, “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**