

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

**CTWR 206b : WRITING THE SCREENPLAY  
Section 19352D**

Instructor: BOB TZUDIKER  
Class Schedule: FRIDAY/ 1pm - 3:50pm  
Class Location: Zoom until further notice  
Office Hours: By phone, FaceTime or Zoom, as scheduled  
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 work. Preparation is essential to productive class time.

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

**Course Reading:**

Read 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>

We may also read "Philoctetes," by Sophocles (any translation EXCEPT Seamus Heaney's), depending on the evolution of the class schedule.

**Grading Criteria:**

Students will present their work in class or post on app.zoodiker.com no later than 6pm on each Wednesday. If there is any technical issue with app.zoodiker.com, student is responsible for emailing pages to the class. This allows time for professor and classmates to read the work before the classes on Friday. Late work will be penalized in grading.

Participation:	10%
Weekly assignments	65%
First Draft	15%
Rewrite	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:**

All material is expected to be turned in on time and in the proper format. Outlines and treatments should be submitted in Word or other word processing program. Script pages should be in Final Draft, saved as PDFs and posted to the group 206b on [app.Zoodiker.com](http://app.Zoodiker.com). Assignments may 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. In fact, your classmates’ work should not be discussed with any outsiders (meaning anyone not in our 206b class).

**Recording Devices:**

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

**Laptop and Cell Phone Policy:**

While we are meeting via Zoom, this paragraph only partially applies as we will all be on our computers. BUT the computers are to be used for class purposes only. No web surfing, checking email or texts during class unless specifically asked to do so. If we meet in person, students should bring a laptop (if available) to class for work on in-class exercises. 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.

**Writing Division Attendance Policy:**

This class is a workshop and your participation in the discussion is important. Participation includes full involvement in, and contribution to, class discussion, as well as reading (in advance at times; see schedule) the assignments of your colleagues and offering thoughtful, constructive comments.

Class attendance is mandatory and students are expected to be on time and prepared for each class. Tardiness is unprofessional and disrespectful to the class. Two late arrivals equals one full absence. Two unexcused absences will result in your final grade being lowered by a half grade point (Ex. A to A-) Any further unexcused absences will result in your final grade being lowered another two thirds of a point (ex: B to a C+) for each absence

Excused absences can include, but are not limited to: illness, both physical and mental; death of a loved one; personal emergency; sporting events (for Student-Athletes) or other university-sponsored activities; religious holidays, and so on.

If you find you must miss class due to personal emergency or personal crisis, please contact your professor as soon as possible so they can assist you in finding the appropriate University care and guidance. Your health and well-being are of utmost importance to the Wells Writing Division and to your Faculty.

### **Class Schedule:**

Please note that all dates, assignments and subjects are subject to change at the discretion of the professor. We may 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**, unless notified in advance that we will be reading certain selections aloud.

#### **Week 1, Jan. 15:** 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. We'll discuss each story for about 20 minutes. (10% of grade)

**ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:** Distill outline into one page

#### **Week 2, Jan 22:** Discuss stories.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Write approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

(And remember participation is another 10% of your grade, which means contributing to class discussions of each others' work.)

#### **Week 3, Jan 29:** Discuss stories more, most likely

The questions we ask ourselves create the world.

**READ** "What Writers Really Do..." 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>  
Keep writing. approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

#### **Week 4, Feb 5:** Openings.

"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.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

#### **Week 5, Feb 12:** Questions

Control the questions the audience is asking themselves from scene to scene.

**ASSIGNMENT:** Approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

#### **Week 6:, Feb 19** The implied past

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

**ASSIGNMENT:** approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

#### **Week 7, Feb 26:** Echoes

Imagery and repetition.

ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

**Week 8, March 5:** Her/Him again?

Character character character.

ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

NO CLASS ON MARCH 12

**Week 9, March 19:** Compression

“Eschew surplusage.”

ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

**Week 10, March 26:** Discuss pages

ASSIGNMENT: Approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

**Week 11, April 2:** Discuss pages

Discuss our experiences in doing this classwork, what flows easily and what has been difficult.

ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

**Week 12, April 9:** Discuss pages

TBD

ASSIGNMENT: Write approx. 10 pages (5% of grade)

**Week 13, April 16:** Discuss pages

ASSIGNMENT: Complete your first draft.

**Week 14, April 23:** Final script discussions and review.

DELIVER: Final pages of first draft (15% of grade)

Your first draft should be finished by now.

ASSIGNMENT: Begin rewrite.

**NO CLASS ON APRIL 30**

**Finals Week:** Deliver final screenplay rewrite by MAY 10.

Final script pages replace a final exam for 10% 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” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](http://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](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

### Support Systems:

*Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*  
[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](http://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](http://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](http://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

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

[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](http://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](http://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](mailto: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 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.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> <b>FOOD AND DRINKS (OTHER THAN WATER) ARE NOT PERMITTED IN ANY INSTRUCTIONAL SPACES IN THE CINEMATIC ARTS COMPLEX</b></p>
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