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

USC School
of Cinematic Arts
Peter Stark Producing Program

CTWR 523

INTRO TO THE SCREENPLAY
Fall 2024

Instructor: Aaron Carew
Class Schedule: Wednesdays, 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM
Class Location: SCA 362
Office Hours: By appointment
Contact Information: acarew@usc.edu and aaron.carewla@gmail.com

Course Goals:

- Developing an idea into a feature screenplay outline and a first draft.
- Creating unique characters with strong inner lives and complex relationships.
- Establishing a clear personal connection to drive and enliven the story.
- Deepening understanding of narrative cinematic technique and structure.
- Acquiring a professional command of format, visual writing style, and dialogue.
- Removing the preciousness while learning to make decisions and work fast.

Course Objectives: Developing a feature-length idea, both orally (class pitch) and in written form. We begin with a character-driven story, identifying whose story it is, what they want, what their obstacles and antagonists are, and what specific action they take. We will focus on protagonists actively driving events and momentum externally, while also tracking their internal journey. This remains the same for secondary plot characters. The main subplots are also protagonist-driven plots with clear internal arcs as well. We don't want characters that seem like sidekicks or devices for the main protagonist and story—we want to get into their hearts and minds as they drive their own stories. We will examine characters' wants vs. their needs and see where they begin and end up through these stories.

Students will write a character-driven outline, then write a feature screenplay to be completed by semester's end.

Besides story elements, students are encouraged to understand why they are choosing to write their particular story. How does it speak to them, their interests, or experience?

Course Description

It is my belief (based on experience) that we learn best through example, not by theoretical discussion. To that end, the material in this class will always be rooted in the real world. We will endeavor to craft, in detail, a screenplay — from the idea stage to the final-act resolution. We will deconstruct ideas and rebuild them to achieve organic moments of true character transformation. Furthermore, I want to provide insight into the politics of how to make your stories more viable — it takes more than just a good script to get a film produced, and that fact should always be considered when crafting your narratives. When you finish this class, you should have a much better understanding of screenplays and the inner workings of story craft.

So You Want To Be A Screenwriter? 'You're gonna need a bigger boat.'

In this course, students will learn the fundamentals of screenwriting (including, but not limited to: idea generation, story and character development, world-building, and rewriting), resulting in the first draft of an original screenplay.

A successful writing workshop requires the active, supportive participation of all its writers. Please come to class each week having read and thoughtfully analyzed your peers' pages. This is not a screenplay competition; rather, this course will function much like a writers' room does, and accordingly, your shared goal is to help take each other's work from good to great.

Over the course of the semester, students will generate 90 -110 pages of original screenplay material.

In addition to their own writing, students will read, discuss, and critique one another's work. Good notes from a producer (or another writer) can be instrumental in elevating a script from good to great, or in practical terms, from a "good read" to a "must-buy" (or even better, to a greenlit project). Of course, notes will only help if the writer knows how to implement them effectively and practically — and how to do so without changing what the producer liked about the script in the first place.

Learning Objectives

During our semester, students will learn how to arc out a complete story and how to break it out into individual scenes. By the end of the class, students will achieve measurable skills that will allow them to create and craft a fully realized screenplay. Our approach will be driven from an industry best-practices view. By focusing on the structure of the screenplay, story-driven character development, time-tested writing practices, and what the industry expects from screenwriters, students will learn skills to help make them competitive in the field of narrative screenwriting.

Course Notes

A positive attitude and a willingness to contribute and collaborate every week will earn you your grade. In other words, show up prepared (having written and read your pages) and be a decent human being, and we'll all learn a lot and have a bunch of fun along the way.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

"Writing is reading." The single best way to become better at screenwriting (other than writing a ton) is reading other scripts. Over the course of the semester, you will occasionally be assigned readings of produced Hollywood scripts or articles about storytelling that I have found helpful. Your primary reading work, however, will be the thoughtful attention and consideration you give to your peers' work each week.

In order to give us plenty of time to read your work, all written assignments must be emailed to the class (that includes the instructor and fellow students) by <mark>5:00 PM on the MONDAY</mark> before the WEDNESDAY class date. All assignments should be submitted via the shared class google drive, in Final Draft AND PDF form.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Requirements

To fully participate in this screenwriting course, you will need basic technological proficiency, including the ability to navigate online learning platforms and use screenwriting software. This course will require you to have access to specific software and hardware to engage effectively with the content and submit your assignments.

Required Software:

- **Final Draft:** This is the industry-standard screenwriting software that will be used for all writing assignments. Students are expected to have access to Final Draft, either by purchasing a license or using the free trial version. If you need financial assistance, please check with the USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program for potential access.
- **PDF Reader:** You will need a PDF reader to view and annotate your peers' scripts.
- **Zoom:** As some classes or workshops may be held virtually, ensure you have Zoom installed on your device.

Hardware Requirements:

- A reliable laptop or desktop computer with internet access capable of running Final Draft and Zoom.
- Access to a printer may be helpful but is not required.

Additional Resources:

- **USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program:** If you do not have access to a suitable computer, you may be eligible to borrow a laptop through this program. USC Computing Center Laptop Loaner Program
- **Software Support and Availability:** For assistance with downloading or using the required software, you can find support through USC's technology resources. Software available to USC Campus
- **Zoom Information for Students:** Ensure you are comfortable using Zoom for virtual meetings or workshops. Zoom information for students,
- **Brightspace Help for Students:** For any issues or questions related to accessing the course materials on Brightspace, refer to the following resource. Brightspace help for students

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

This course includes a mix of suggested readings and supplementary materials to enhance your understanding of screenwriting.

- **Required Text:**
  - **Screenplay: Writing the Pictures, 2nd Edition** by Robin Russin. This foundational text can be purchased online and on Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Screenplay-Writing-Robin-U-Russin/dp/1935247069
  - **Scripts:** Various Hollywood scripts will be assigned throughout the semester. These will be provided as PDFs.
- **Where to Obtain Materials:**
  - All required readings are available online or will be emailed to you directly.

Supplementary Materials

While not required, the following materials are highly recommended for further exploration of screenwriting techniques and industry insights:

- **"The Screenwriter's Bible" by David Trottier:** A comprehensive guide that covers everything from script formatting to pitching your screenplay.

- **"Save the Cat!" by Blake Snyder:** A popular book on screenwriting that breaks down the structure of successful scripts in a practical, accessible way.
- **Industry Publications:** Subscribe to **"Deadline," "Variety"** or **"The Hollywood Reporter"** to stay updated on industry trends and insights.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Assignments in this course are designed to align with the learning objectives, ensuring that each task measures your progress in mastering the key skills required for screenwriting.

- **Weekly Writing Assignments:** Each week, you will submit a set of pages from your screenplay, focusing on different aspects of screenwriting, such as character development, dialogue, or scene structure. These assignments will be graded based on their alignment with the course's learning objectives, such as demonstrating effective character arcs or maintaining narrative tension.
- **Midterm Assignment:** This will involve the submission of the first 30 pages of your screenplay, along with a scene-by-scene outline for the remainder of the script. The midterm will assess your ability to structure a screenplay and develop a compelling narrative.
- **Final Assignment:** By the end of the semester, you will submit your FULL first draft of your screenplay. This will be the culmination of your work in the course, and it will be graded on overall structure, character development, and narrative coherence.
- **Peer Reviews:** Throughout the course, you will provide and receive feedback on your classmates' scripts. This will help you develop critical reading skills and understand the collaborative nature of screenwriting.

Participation

Participation is a crucial component of this course and will be evaluated based on your active engagement in class discussions, peer reviews, and workshops.

- **To Earn Full Credit:** Students must consistently attend classes, contribute thoughtful feedback during workshops, and demonstrate preparedness by completing readings and assignments on time.
- **In-Class Work:** Active participation in in-class writing exercises and discussions is essential. Your willingness to engage with your peers' work and share your own process will contribute to your participation grade.

Grading Breakdown

The grading for this screenwriting course is designed to reflect your progress and engagement with the material. The breakdown below details how each component of your work contributes to your final grade. Participation is an essential element. ==Please note non-attendance may result in a grade reduction, as outlined in the course-specific policies.==

Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (Assignments)	Points	% of Grade
Weekly Writing Assignments	200	20%
Midterm Assignment	200	20%
Final Assignment	300	30%
Peer Reviews	100	10%
Participation	150	15%
In-Class Writing Exercises	50	5%
TOTAL	**1000**	**100%**

Grading Scale

Final course grades will be determined using the following scale. Please check with your department or school for any specific grading scale requirements:

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
A	100% to 94%
A-	93% to 90%
B+	89% to 87%
B	86% to 83%
B-	82% to 80%
C+	79% to 77%

Letter Grade	Percentage Range
C	76% to 73%
C-	72% to 70%
D+	69% to 67%
D	66% to 63%
D-	62% to 60%
F	59% to 0%

Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments must be submitted via Google Drive in both Final Draft and PDF formats. Weekly writing assignments are due by 6:00 PM on the Monday before the Wednesday class.

Grading Timeline

Grading and feedback will be provided within one week of submission for weekly writing assignments. Midterm assignments will be graded within two weeks of submission. Final assignment grades will be posted no later than one week after the course ends. Detailed feedback will accompany each graded assignment to guide your revision process.

Course-Specific Policies

- **Late Work Submissions:** Late submissions will incur a penalty of 10% per day unless an extension has been granted in advance. After one week, the assignment will not be accepted, and a grade of zero will be recorded. Multiple late submissions will result in possible course failure.
- **Missed Classes:** Attendance is vital for your success in this course. If you miss a class, you are responsible for catching up on the material and submitting any required work on time. Student athletes with approved Travel Request Letters and students with religious observance commitments must notify the instructor in advance to arrange alternative coursework.
- **Use of Technology in the Classroom:** Laptops are permitted for note-taking and scriptwriting purposes only. Please refrain from using devices for unrelated activities during class time.

Attendance

WRITING DIVISION ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected be on time, prepared for each class, and meet professional standards. Students are allowed two absences throughout the semester. On the third absence, students will have their final grade lowered by 10% and an additional 10% for each absence thereafter. Two late arrivals equate to one full absence.

NOTE: Exceptions will be made in the case of religious holidays and DSP accommodations.

In the case of medical emergencies, family emergencies, or allowances needed for personal well-being, all concerns must be communicated and approved by the instructor. If there is a difference of opinion, the student can contact the Writing Division at (213) 740-3303 or writing@cinema.usc.edu

Exemptions to the attendance policy will be allowed on a case-by-case basis and must be supported by a written accommodation request from the USC Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS).

Students who become ill and need to self-isolate will be supported in their efforts to stay current with classwork and assignments. Faculty are no longer required to provide an option for students to zoom into class. However, Faculty may choose to use zoom at their discretion in an effort to help students stay current in their course work.

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.

Students must contact the professor 24 hours prior to class start time if they need to miss class for any reason.

Classroom Norms

Creating a positive and productive learning environment is crucial for our success in this screenwriting course. The following norms outline the behaviors that are encouraged and discouraged during our in-person and virtual sessions:

- **Encouraged Behaviors:**
  - **Active Participation:** Engage actively in discussions, workshops, and peer reviews. Your insights and feedback are valuable to the collective learning experience.

- o **Respectful Communication:** Learn how to give a note – studio standard model. Listen attentively when others are speaking, and provide constructive feedback that is focused on the work, not the individual.
  - o **Punctuality:** Arrive on time for class, whether in person or Zoom.
  - o **Collaboration:** Embrace a spirit of collaboration by supporting your peers and contributing to a positive group dynamic. Writing is a collaborative process, and your willingness to help others will also enhance your own work.
- **Discouraged Behaviors:**
  - o **Distractions:** Avoid side conversations, phone use, or any other distractions that might disrupt the flow of the class. Laptops and other devices should be used only for course-related activities. The use of laptops in class is fully at my discretion – some weeks you'll need them, some weeks you won't.
  - o **Dominating Discussions:** While active participation is encouraged, be mindful not to dominate discussions. Allow space for others to contribute, and listen as much as you speak.
  - o **Dismissive Attitudes:** All feedback should be constructive and focused on improving the work. Dismissive or negative comments about others' ideas or work are not acceptable.

Zoom Etiquette

When participating in our course sessions via Zoom, maintaining professional and respectful behavior is essential to ensure a smooth and effective learning environment:

- **Camera Use:** <mark>Yours MUST BE ON during the session.</mark> This helps foster a more engaging and connected class experience. However, if you are unable to keep your camera on for any reason, please inform me before class.
- **Mute When Not Speaking:** To minimize background noise and distractions, keep your microphone muted when you're not speaking. Unmute yourself when you wish to contribute to the discussion.
- **Chat Use:** Use the chat function respectfully and appropriately. It's a useful tool for asking questions or adding comments without interrupting the speaker, but avoid side conversations that could be distracting.
- **Professional Environment:** Make an effort to participate from a quiet, well-lit space where you can focus on the class. Dress appropriately, as you would for an in-person class, and ensure your background is not distracting.
- **Respectful Communication:** Be mindful of tone and language in all forms of communication during Zoom sessions. Typed comments can sometimes be misinterpreted, so aim for clarity and respect in your words.

If you have any concerns or difficulties complying with these Zoom etiquette guidelines, please reach out to me privately so we can find a solution that works for you.

Academic Integrity
The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

A.I. POLICY

The uses of generative Artificial Intelligence to create narrative continue to evolve throughout the media workplace. However, it is vital that before relying on AI to assist in aspects of storytelling that we learn to source and execute our work via our own unique imagination.

Creating, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course. All assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated tools is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies
USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are a crucial part of your educational experience and occur university-wide at the end of the semester. These evaluations allow you to provide valuable feedback on your experience in this course, including the effectiveness of the teaching methods, the relevance of the materials, and your overall satisfaction with the learning environment. The insights gathered from these evaluations help improve the course for future students and guide the instructor in making necessary adjustments. Your honest and constructive input is highly valued.

Course Schedule

The course is structured to guide you through the screenwriting process, from idea generation to completing a full first draft of your screenplay. Below is the weekly schedule outlining the topics, required readings, tasks, and deliverables.

Week	Date	Topic/Activity	Required Reading/Tasks	Deliverables
Week 1	September 4th	Intros, pitch loglines, and go over outlining	"Screenplay: Writing the Pictures" by Robin Russin and William Missouri Downs, Chapter 1	Assignment 1: Read a script similar to your idea and plot its main external beats (Due Sept 11). Assignment 2: Fill out the character sheet for your project (Due Sept 9).
Week 2	September 11th	Protagonist-driven A plots, adding protagonist-driven subplots	"Screenplay: Writing the Pictures" by Robin Russin and William Missouri Downs, Chapter 2	Workshop: Go over A plots in class. Assignment: Add external and internal B plots (Due Sept 16).
Week 3	September 18th	Beat Sheets	"Screenplay: Writing the Pictures" by Robin Russin and William Missouri Downs, Chapter 3	Workshop: Go over beat sheets and give notes. Assignment: Connect and fill in all scenes. Add setups, payoffs, and layers and turn beat sheets into 4-5 page outlines (Due Sept 23).
Week 4	September 25th	Outlines	Hollywood script: "The Matrix"	Focus: Do you have internal arcs, strong subplots? Workshop: Everyone shares their outlines and gets notes in class. Assignment: Rework and turn in revised out by Sept 30th
Week 5	October 2nd	Revised Outlines		Focus: Do you have internal arcs, strong subplots? Workshop: Everyone shares their red-lined revised outlines and gets notes in class. Assignment: Write the first 10-15 pages (Sequence 1) and upload them by Oct 7th.
Week 6	October 9th	First 15 pages (Sequence 1) Group A	"Screenplay: Writing the Pictures" by Robin Russin and William Missouri Downs, Chapter 4	Focus: Openings. Do you hook us in ten? Workshop: Group A shares their first 15 pages for table reads (Sequence 1) and gets notes. Assignment: Write Sequence 2 (pages 16-30) (Due Oct 14).
Week 7	October 16th	First 15 Pages (Sequence 1) Group B	Peer Review of Classmates' Pages	Focus: Making sure your end of Act One has the main protagonist actively driving the plot. Workshop: Group B shares their first 15 pages for table reads (Sequence 1) and gets notes. Assignment: Everyone reads and gives notes on all Sequence 2s (Due Oct 21).

Week	Date	Topic/Activity	Required Reading/Tasks	Deliverables
Week 8	October 23rd	Go over notes for Sequence 2 (Pages 16-30)	Review of feedback	Focus: The Monster that is Act Two. How to track, elevate, and escalate. Heighten and deepen. Workshop: Class goes over all Sequence 2s (pages 16-30) and receives notes in class. Assignment 1: Write and upload Sequence 3 (pages 31-45) (Due Oct 28). Assignment 2: Everyone reads and uploads notes to all on Sequence 3 (Due Oct 30).
Week 9	October 30th	Go over notes for Sequence 3 (Pages 31-45)	Hollywood script: "Star Wars"	Focus: Preparing for the midpoint. Charting the arc. Workshop: Class goes over notes for Sequence 3 (pages 31-45). Assignment 1: Write Sequence 4 to midpoint (pages 46-60) (Due Nov 4). Assignment 2: Everyone reads and gives notes to all Sequence 4s (Due Nov 6).
Week 10	November 6th	Go over notes for Sequence 4 (Pages 46-60)	Peer Review of Classmates' Pages	Focus: Checking in for issues. What are you stuck on? Workshop: Class goes over notes for Sequence 4s (pages 46-60). Assignment 1: Write Sequence 5 (pages 61-75) (Due Nov 11). Assignment 2: Everyone reads and gives notes to all Sequence 5s (Due Nov 13).
Week 11	November 13th	Go over notes for Sequence 5 (Pages 61-75)		Focus: Setups and Payoffs. Workshop: Go over notes for all Sequence 5s (pages 61-75). Assignment 1: Write Sequence 6 – to the end of Act Two (pages 76-90ish) (Due Nov 18). Assignment 2: Everyone reads and gives notes to all Sequence 6s (Due Nov 20).
Week 12	November 20th	Go over notes for Sequence 6 (Pages 75-90ish)	Peer Review of Classmates' Pages	Focus: How low can we go? All is Lost by the end of Act Two. Workshop: Class goes over notes for Sequence 6s (pages 75-90ish). Assignment 1: Write Sequence 7s (pages 90-110ish) (Due Dec 2nd). Assignment 2: Everyone reads and gives notes to all Sequence 7s (Due Dec 4).
Week 13	December 4th	Group B table reads their Act Threes (end).	"Screenplay: Writing the Pictures" by Robin Russin and William Missouri Downs, Chapter 5	Focus: Making the protagonist fight their biggest battle yet—also, no one is lucky! Workshop: Group B table reads their Act Threes (end). Assignment: Keep revising and gathering notes into main points for a polish or final pass.

Week	Date	Topic/Activity	Required Reading/Tasks	Deliverables
Week 14	December 11th	Group A table reads their Act Threes (end).	Peer Review and Instructor Feedback	Focus: What next? Plans for rewriting. Workshop: Group A table reads Act Three (end). Assignment: Final due: Dec 18 – Finished first draft completed.
Finals	December 18th	--	--	Final Assignment: Completed First Draft Due

Important Notes:

- **Homework and Out-of-Class Work:** Expect to spend significant time outside of class on writing, readings, and revisions. This is essential to meet the course requirements and ensure that your screenplay progresses steadily.
- **Final:** The final assignment (completed first draft) is due on December 18th. There will be no separate final exam.
- **Class Schedule:** Please note that all due dates and assignments are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.
- **NO CLASS ON AUGUST 28TH 2024:** Class will be made up sometime during the semester.

Weekly Schedule Breakdown: Please note that all due dates and assignments are subject to change at the discretion of the professor.

- **NO CLASS ON AUGUST 28TH 2024 – CLASS WILL BE MADE UP SOME TIME DURING THE SMESTER.**

- **Week 1: September 4th** – Intros, pitch loglines, and go over outlining.
  - Focus: What is the point of a logline? How do we write a character-driven outline?
  - Assignment 1: Read a script that is similar (in plot, theme, genre, etc.) to your idea. Plot out its main external beats (one page) on the structure sheet and upload it to Google Drive by next class – Sept 11th.
  - Assignment 2: Fill out the external/internal character sheet for your project and upload it to Google Drive by Monday, September 9th.
- **Week 2: September 11th** – Protagonist-driven A plots, adding protagonist-driven subplots
  - Focus: These are character-driven plots and subplots.
  - Workshop: Go over A plots in class.

- o   Assignment: Add external and internal B plots and upload by Sept 16th.
- **Week 3: September 18th** – Beat Sheets
  - o   Focus: Quick checklist of what should occur at the main points.
  - o   Workshop: Go over beat sheets and give notes.
  - o   Assignment: Connect and fill in all scenes. Add setups, payoffs, and layers and turn beat sheets into 4-5 page outlines. Upload them to the Google Drive folder by Sept 23rd.
- **Week 4: September 25th** – Outlines
  - o   Focus: Do you have internal arcs, strong subplots?
  - o   Workshop: Everyone shares their outlines and gets notes in class.
  - o   Assignment: Rework and turn in revised, red-lined outline (yes, it will change) and upload by Sept 30th
- **Week 5: October 2nd** – Outlines Revision
  - o   Focus: Do you have internal arcs, strong subplots?
  - o   Workshop: Everyone shares their red-lined revised outlines and gets notes in class.
  - o   Assignment: Write the first 10-15 pages (Sequence 1) and upload them by Oct 7th.
- **Week 6: October 9th** – First 15 pages (Sequence 1) Group A
  - o   Focus: Openings. Do you hook us in ten?
  - o   Workshop: Group A shares their first 15 pages for table reads (Sequence 1) and gets notes.
  - o   Assignment: Write Sequence 2 (pages 16-30) and upload by Oct 14th.
    - ▪   This is the end of Act One.
- **Week 7: October 16th** – First 15 Pages (Sequence 1) Group B
  - o   Focus: Making sure your end of Act One has the main protagonist actively driving the plot.
  - o   Workshop: Group B shares their first 15 pages for table reads (Sequence 1) and gets notes.
  - o   Assignment: Everyone reads and gives notes on all Sequence 2s. Upload by next class, Oct 21st, and be prepared to discuss.
- **Week 8: October 23rd** – Go over notes for Sequence 2 (Pages 16-30)
  - o   Focus: The Monster that is Act Two. How to track, elevate, and escalate. Heighten and deepen.
  - o   Workshop: Class goes over all Sequence 2s (pages 16-30) and receives notes in class.
  - o   Assignment 1: Write and upload Sequence 3 (pages 31-45) by Monday, Oct 28th.
  - o   Assignment 2: Everyone reads and uploads notes to all on Sequence 3s by next class, Oct 30th. Be prepared to discuss.
- **Week 9: October 30th** – Go over notes for Sequence 3 (Pages 31-45)
  - o   Focus: Preparing for the midpoint. Charting the arc.
  - o   Workshop: Class goes over notes for Sequence 3 (pages 31-45).
  - o   Assignment 1: Write Sequence 4 to midpoint (pages 46-60) and upload by Monday, Nov 4th.

- o Assignment 2: Everyone reads and gives notes to all Sequence 4s (pages 46-60) by next class, Nov 6th. Be prepared to discuss.
- **Week 10: November 6th** – Go over notes for Sequence 4 (Pages 46-60)
  - o Focus: Checking in for issues. What are you stuck on?
  - o Workshop: Class goes over notes for Sequence 4s (pages 46-60).
  - o Assignment 1: Write Sequence 5 (pages 61-75) and upload by Monday, Nov 11th.
  - o Assignment 2: Everyone reads and gives notes to all Sequence 5s (pages 61-75) by next class, Nov 13th. Be prepared to discuss.
- **Week 11: November 13th** – Go over notes for Sequence 5 (Pages 61-75)
  - o Focus: Setups and Payoffs.
  - o Workshop: Go over notes for all Sequence 5s (pages 61-75).
  - o Assignment 1: Write Sequence 6 – to the end of Act Two (pages 76-90ish) and upload by Monday, Nov 18th.
  - o Assignment 2: Everyone reads and gives notes to all Sequence 6s (pages 76-90ish) by next class, Nov 20th. Be prepared to discuss.
- **Week 12: November 20th** – Go over notes for Sequence 6 (Pages 75-90ish)
  - o Focus: How low can we go? All is Lost by the end of Act Two.
  - o Workshop: Class goes over notes for Sequence 6s (pages 75-90ish).
  - o Assignment 1: Write Sequence 7s (pages 90-110ish) and upload by Monday, December 2nd.
  - o Assignment 2: Everyone reads and gives notes to all Sequence 7s (pages 90-110ish) by next class, Dec 4th. Be prepared to discuss.
- **Week 13: December 4th** – Group B table reads their Act Threes (end)
  - o Focus: Making the protagonist fight their biggest battle yet—also, no one is lucky!
  - o Workshop: Group B table reads their Act Threes (end).
  - o Assignment: Keep revising and gathering notes into main points for a polish or final pass.
- **Week 14: December 11th** – Group A table reads their Act Threes (end)
  - o Focus: What next? Plans for rewriting.
  - o Workshop: Group A table reads their Act Threes (end).
  - o Assignment: Final due: Dec 18 – Finished first draft completed.
- **Finals Due:** December 18th – Completed First Draft.

The School of Cinematic Arts Support Systems and Statements

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 persons 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 or anonymously submit a report on SCA Community: https://scacommunity.usc.edu/secure/diversityEquity/ You can also read more about how to report discrimination based on a protected class here: https://eeotix.usc.edu/get-help/what-are-my-choices-text/

SCA Office of Student Services
213-740-8358 or StudentAffairs@cinema.usc.edu

SCA Embedded Therapists
Students enrolled in an SCA major program can schedule an appointment with an embedded therapist for the School of Cinematic Arts through the student health portal MySHR.

SCA Community
For additional SCA resources please visit scacommunity.usc.edu

Creative Technology and Support
(213) 821-4571
creativetech@cinema.usc.edu
Location: SCA 128
Support Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 8:30 PM
https://knowledgebase.sca.usc.edu/
https://workstations.sca.usc.edu/

Physical Production Office
The Physical Production Office assists students and faculty with production-related matters including production numbers, locations, permits, insurance, gear and equipment vendors, safety issues, and crew and actor policies. More information can be found by visiting the online Production Procedures and Safety Handbook. The Physical Production Office is located at SCA 304 and is open every weekday from 9am-5pm (Fridays 9am-1pm). You can also reach the Office by calling 213-740-1298 or by email at spo@cinema.usc.edu.

Office of Industry Relations
School of Cinematic Arts - SCA 235
(213) 740-4432
ir@cinema.usc.edu

Cinematic Arts Library Research Guide
https://libguides.usc.edu/cinema

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:
The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for

each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodation is not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

COVID-19 Resource Center - https://coronavirus.usc.edu/what-should-i-do/

Counseling and Mental Health - *(213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - *988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call*
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - *(213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - *(213) 740-5086*
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - *(213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - *(213) 740-0776*

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101
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
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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu
Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

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