

**CTWR 585 - Section 19361**

Advanced Genre Writing: Adapting From the Public Domain  
Fall 2024

**Time:** Mondays 1:00 - 3:50 P.M.

**Location:** SCA 245

**Professor:** Sean Hood, shood@usc.edu

**Office Hours:** Tuesday 11:00-12:00 or by appointment over Zoom

**COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVE:**

CTWR 585: Advanced Genre Writing: Adapting From the Public Domain is a screenwriting course in which you will develop and write a feature-length screenplay adapted from a piece of intellectual property that is in the public domain. You will choose the material you wish to adapt before the semester begins. During the semester, you will use the tools you have acquired regarding screenplay structure, character conflict and development, set-up and payoff structure, and the discovery and use of theme.

We will add to that toolbox specific techniques regarding the deconstruction of narrative or visual story material, the repurposing of story in screenplay form, and the reimagining of established story elements, all while staying true to the heart of the original material you are adapting. You will complete the first draft of a feature-length screenplay, which you will deliver during finals week as the final product of this course.

**CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:**

Each **WEEKLY** assignment is due the following week. Initial assignments will involve story analysis and development. After a beat sheet is completed, revised and “greenlit,” your assignments will involve writing sections of your screenplay, generally in chronological order. Specific assignments may differ slightly from student to student.

Note that students will be split into **A and B groups** for the purposes of discussion and feedback. Some weeks you will be delivering batches of pages for the entire class to read, other weeks you will be emailing new pages to the professor only. See the class schedule for details.

Assignments should be posted (as PDF files) to the appropriate Brightspace discussion board by Friday at 10 PM weekly to allow time for reading before class. You are expected to read all other class members’ assignments before each class; this will enable us to use our classroom time most productively. Late assignments will be put to the end of the queue for discussion, which may result in your falling significantly behind in your coursework.

In general, it is possible adjust weekly deadlines as long as arrangements are made with the professor at least one week before the deadline. Otherwise late assignments will be graded down.

Classroom discussion is a substantial part of the course. You are expected to participate in the development of the your peer’s stories constructively, supportively, and enthusiastically.

**LAPTOP AND CELL PHONE POLICY:**

Laptops are welcome in class. However: Laptops must be closed when anyone is giving a presentation of any kind. No emailing/IM-ing/texting/tweeting/etc. is permitted in class. No web surfing is permitted during class time. Ignoring these policies is a breach of classroom decorum and extreme disrespectful to your fellow students. 2

**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.

**WRITING DIVISION ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected be on time, prepared for each class, and meet professional standards.

CTWR 513 only meets once a week and timely attendance is mandatory and failure to attend all class sessions from beginning to end may affect grades. 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 equates 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](mailto: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. Attending class via Zoom is possible if arrangements are made beforehand.

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.

### **GRADES:**

Your grade will be based on your score out of 1000 semester points:

- Classroom participation (100 points, or 10%)
- Weekly Assignments (400 points total, or 40%)
  1. Fairy Tale Beat Sheets (30 points)
  2. Chosen I.P. Beat Sheet (30 points)
  3. Adaptation of I.P. Beat Sheet (50 points)
  4. Revision of Adaptation Beat Sheet. (50 points)
  5. Script pages 1 - 15 (30 points)
  6. Script pages 16-30 (30 points)
  7. Script pages 31-45 (30 points)
  8. Script pages 46-60 (30 points)
  9. Script pages 61-75 (30 points)
  10. Script pages 76-90 (30 points)
  11. Script pages 91-105 (30 points)
  12. Script pages 105- END (30 points)
- Written notes on your Peers' work (100 points, or 10%)
- Final screenplay (400 points, or 40%)

The grades for your assignments and final screenplay will reflect proper formatting, as well as competence in spelling and grammar. Grades will be lowered for egregious errors in these areas.

An "A" denotes exceptional work. A "B" indicates good work, and a "C" is awarded for average work. Simply completing the assigned work is, in and of itself, no guarantee of a high grade.

As per Writing Division policy the following is a breakdown of numeric 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%

## CLASSES BY WEEK:

### Week 1 (Aug. 26)

#### Discussion:

- Introductions.
- What makes an adaptation good?
- What makes an adaptation bad?
- The elements: Plot, character, theme
- Adaptation exercise - Monkey's Paw

#### Assignment Due Friday (Sept 6):

- Create a short (1-3 pages) beat sheet for Cinderella or The Pied Piper.
- Annotate:
  1. obligatory plot beats
  2. character moments and lines
  3. thematic beats
- Create a short beat sheet (1-3 pages) for an adaptation of your chosen Fairy Tale
- Annotate:
  1. plot beats
  2. character moments and lines
  3. thematic beats
- Please read your peers' assignments before our next class on Sept. 9.
- Please be prepared to **Present your chosen I.P. to the class** on Sept. 9.

### Labor Day

### Week 2 (Sept. 9)

#### Discussion:

- Discussion of Fairy Tale assignment
- Adaptation as template
  - Leaning into genre: Obligatory beats
  - Updating/adapting characters
  - Exploring Theme
- Students present their chosen I.P. to the class.

#### Assignment Due Friday Sept 13:

- Create a long (4-8 pages) beat sheet for you chosen I.P.
- Annotate obligatory plot beats, character moments, lines, and thematic beats.
- Read your peers assignments in preparation for discussion.

**Week 3 (Sept. 16)**

Discussion - Problems of Adaptation:

- Selecting, Combining, and Expanding Elements
- Cinematic Structure: Acts, Sequences, Scenes
- Audience Expectations.
- Discussion of Student's Chosen I.P.

Assignment Due Friday Sept 20:

- Create a long (4-8 pages) beat sheet for your adaptation.
  - Annotate obligatory plot beats, character moments, lines, and thematic beats.
  - Be sure to read and provide **written feedback** in the discussion forum.
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**Week 4 (Sept. 23)**

Discussion - Revising Story:

- Story Tension (Plot) — setting up major (plot, character, thematic) beats.
- Character Work - tracking the arc/change.
- Clarity and consistency of Theme. (Character Needs and Subplots)
- Processing Feedback
- Discussion of Long Beat Sheets - feedback for revision.

Assignment Due Friday Sept 27:

- Revise your long beat sheet of your adaptation based on feedback.
  - Be sure to read and provide **written feedback** in the discussion forum.
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**Week 5 (Sept. 30)**

Discussion:

- Green Light: Transitioning from Beat Sheet to Script
- Mining the source material.
- Revising beat sheet on the fly.
- Discussion of Long Beat Sheets - preparing to go to script.

Assignment Due Friday Oct 4:

- Write pages 1-15. (i.e. Sequence One)
- Be sure to read and provide **written feedback** in the discussion forum.

### Week 6 (Oct. 7)

Discussion:

- Adaptation tips and techniques
- Opening images and Character Entrances.
- Discussion of Opening Images and Character Introductions in student pages.

Assignment Due Friday Oct. 11:

- Write pages 16-30. (i.e. to the end of Act One)
  - **Group A posts First Acts to the discussion Board.**
  - Group B emails new pages to the the professor.
  - Be sure to read and provide **written feedback** in the discussion forum.
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### Week 7 (Oct. 14)

Discussion:

- Adaptation tips and techniques
- Discussion of group A First Acts.

Assignment Due Friday Oct. 18:

- Write pages 30-45 (i.e. Sequence Three)
  - **Group B post First Acts to the discussion board.**
  - Group A emails new pages to the professor.
  - Be sure to read and provide **written feedback** in the discussion forum.
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### Week 8 (Oct. 21)

Discussion:

- Adaptation tips and techniques
- Discussion of group B First Acts.

Assignment Due Friday Oct 25:

- Write pages 45 - 60 (i.e. To Midpoint Culmination)
  - **Group A posts first half of script to the discussion board.**
  - Group B emails new pages to the professor.
  - Be sure to read and provide **written feedback** in the discussion forum.
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**Week 9 (Oct. 28)**

Discussion:

- Adaptation tips and techniques
- Discussion of group A First Half.

Assignment due Friday Nov 1:

- Write pages 60 - 75 (i.e. Sequence Five)
  - **Group B posts First Half of script to the discussion board.**
  - Group A emails new pages to the professor.
  - Be sure to read and provide **written feedback** in the discussion forum.
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**Week 10 (Nov. 4)**

Discussion:

- Adaptation tips and techniques
- Discussion of Group B pages

Assignment due Friday Nov 15:

- Write pages 75 - 90 (i.e. To End of Second Act)
  - **Group A posts pages to the End of Second Act on the discussion board.**
  - Group B emails new pages to the professor.
  - Be sure to read and provide **written feedback** in the discussion forum.
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**Veterans Day**

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**Week 11 (Nov. 18)**

Discussion:

- Adaptation tips and techniques
- Discussion of pages

Assignment Due Friday Nov 22:

- Write pages 90 - 105 (i.e. Sequence Seven)
  - **Group B posts pages to the End of Second Act on the discussion board.**
  - Group A emails new pages to the professor.
  - Be sure to read and provide **written feedback** in the discussion forum.
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**Week 12 (Nov. 25)**

Discussion:

- Adaptation tips and techniques
- Discussion of pages

Assignment Due Friday Nov 29

- Write pages 105 - End (i.e. last sequences)
  - Group A and B post entire script to the discussion board.
  - Be sure to read and provide **written feedback** in the discussion forum.
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**Week 13 (Dec 2)**

Discussion:

- Adaptation tips and techniques
- Discussion of pages for BOTH Group A and B final Acts.

Assignment:

- Do a two-week POLISH of the script. Post to final discussion board.
  - Final Draft is due **Monday Dec 16 at 10:00 PM.**
  - Do Class evaluations!
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**Optional Zoom Class (Dec 9)**

Discussion: For students who need feedback on new pages, especially if they didn't finish by the final class. This Zoom session is optional.

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**Final Script (Dec 16)**

Again final Scripts are due as a PDF by email on Monday. Dec 16 at 10:00 p.m.

If you want it, feedback on your final script from your professor is available via Zoom after the semester ends and final grades have been posted. Just email for an appointment.

## **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).

## **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](mailto: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://eetix.usc.edu/get-help/what-are-my-choices-text/>

### **SCA Office of Student Services**

213-740-8358 or [StudentAffairs@cinema.usc.edu](mailto: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](http://scacommunity.usc.edu)

### **Creative Technology and Support**

(213) 821-4571 [creativetech@cinema.usc.edu](mailto: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](mailto:spo@cinema.usc.edu).

### **Office of Industry Relations**

School of Cinematic Arts - SCA 235

(213) 740-4432 [ir@cinema.usc.edu](mailto: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

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](http://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto: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](mailto: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**