

English 438: SCRIPTWRITING: STAGE AND FILM
Fall Semester, 2006
Prof. Warren J. Doody
TTH 12:10 - 1:25 SMITH 128: Exam Group 12

Office Hrs.: 10:00 - 12:00 MW; 11:00 - 12:00 TTH;
 or by appointment

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Texts: GRACELAND, Ellen Byron

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This course will serve as a foundation for dramatic writing. Students will develop and apply a critical vocabulary through in-class discussion and critique. Students will create thirty to forty pages of a new work by the end of the semester, either the first act of a stage play, (or long one-act), or the first act of a screenplay. This class also intends to develop the student's critical capacities as they address their own works, published works, and the work of their peers.

COURSE PROCEDURE: The early part of this course is designed to introduce students to various dramatic writing structures and the identification and application of those structures to "plays" written for both screen and stage. Various exercises will be assigned to assist the writer in accomplishing this outcome. Once this foundation has been laid, the writer will then develop an idea, taking it from its germinal stage to a treatment/outline, through a first draft, and then into one or two re-revisions, revisions aided by the notes received in class. All assignments should be typed/word processed.

ATTENDANCE: The nature of this class requires impeccable attendance, particularly during the latter part of the course when we will shift into workshop mode. Steps towards the completion of your new creative work will be clearly delineated and it is essential that you stay up to speed as we move along. I am aware that emergencies arise and I only ask that you keep me abreast of any absences or prospective absences. The Absence Policy will be that of the VU Theater Department: students can miss up to three classes before their grade will be affected. More than three absences will result in the lowering of the student's grade by one full grade for each additional absence. Three tardies are equivalent to one absence.

PLAGIARISM: Do not attempt to pass off someone else's work as your own. This is an extremely serious, punishable offense. Students guilty of plagiarism will receive an automatic failing grade for the class.

GRADING: Your grade will be determined by the following:

Miscellaneous exercises/worksheets	10%
Script steps	10%
First draft of script	25%
Script revision (Final draft)	50%
Participation/Attendance	5%

Assignments will drop half a letter grade for each day late. Exceptions will be made for documented emergencies only. Printer and computer breakdowns will not be accepted as an excuse for tardy assignments. All major assignments must be printed in professional format.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE: The following should serve as a map for our journey rather than a contract. As for the readings from the text, I will inform you of what you need to read and when.

- Week 1: 8/31 - Introduction to Course.
- Week 2: 9/5 - Basic Structure
- 9/7 - No class - out of town
- Week 3: 9/12 - Basic structure application - Witness.
- 9/14 - Basic structure application - I Hate Hamlet (On reserve in library)
- Week 4: 9/19 - The Hero's Journey as Structure.
- 9/21 - Feminine Structure.
- Week 5: 9/26 - "Jaws" - Structure, Obstacle, & Character.
- 9/28 - Continue with "Jaws."
- Week 6: 10/3 - Finish "Jaws."
- 10/5 - Pitch ideas/discuss elements of story.

- Week 7: 10/10 - Two-page treatment
 10/12 - Continue with treatments.
- Week 8: 10/17 - Finish treatments.
 10/19 - Discussion of Graceland - Beats.
- Week 9: 10/24 - Step outline/Event structure.
 10/26 - First five pages of script.
- Week 10: 10/31 - Continue w/first five pages of script.
 11/2 - Finish first five pages of script.

(NOTE: From this point on, the writer will be responsible for five-to-ten pages of new material each week. Due to time limitations, however, the writer is only required to bring three to five pages of new material to class to be workshopped every third class period (give or take). These pages will need to be photocopied in order to pass out to peers and instructor.)

- Week 11: 11/7 - Pages
 11/9 - Pages
- Week 12: 11/14 - Pages.
 11/16 - Pages.
- Week 13: 11/21 - Pages.
 11/23 - Thanksgiving - no class.
- Week 14: 11/28 - Pages.
 11/30 - Pages.
- Week 15: 12/5 - Pages.
 12/7 - Pages.

FINAL EXAM - Tuesday, Dec. 12 @ 10:30 - 12:30.
 - Revised script due.

