

BOSTON UNIVERSITY LOS ANGELES INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
'THE WRITER IN HOLLYWOOD' GRADUATE
CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The Writer in Hollywood 2:
Preparing Your Script for the Entertainment Marketplace

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Instructor: Deborah Baron
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Office: BU in LA offices
Office Hours: Mondays by appointment

Course Objectives & Requirements:

The Writer in Hollywood 2: Preparing your script for the entertainment marketplace (course # CFADR58E) is geared toward students who have completed MFA screenwriting programs and have several full scripts and other writing samples to submit with their applications. Applicants should have a clear interest and experience in writing for film and television and be ready to make the transition to the professional world of Hollywood. This course will emphasize rewriting, extensive work-shopping of writers' material, and the end-of-semester Pitch Festival.

In this advanced screenwriting workshop, students will refine skills they've already acquired, and develop new ones in the process of completing a rewrite of a feature script or a television pilot by the end of the semester. Also, the possibility of working on more than one project exists, and can be discussed with the instructor.

Attendance and class participation are required, as are timely completion of assignments.

The goal of the course is to help students rewrite a draft of a completed screenplay into a dynamic, professional script that can be polished and submitted to agents, managers, producers and executives in the industry. To accomplish this we will determine what "works" in their first drafts, what doesn't, and what they need to accomplish this time around.

(WIH2 continued)

The following aspects of rewriting will be covered in the Monday workshops:

- Greater depth in character development, leading to natural (vs. imposed) changes in structure
- Intensifying the overall dramatic tension and narrative design in the 3 Act (or 2 or 4 Act) framework
- Development of Subplots and Complications through Secondary Characters
- Refining Scene Structure and scene goals: Rewriting scenes with attention to every choice and detail
- Opportunities in *transitions* from one scene to another, both visually and thematically
- Juxtaposition of imagery
- Use of contrast -- dialogue vs. behavior; subtext
- *Original and specific choices* in Location and Setting
- Worthy Rivals and Obstacles
- Setting up and paying off
- Making obligatory scenes interesting

Required Reading:

"The Screenwriter's Guide to Agents and Managers" by John Lewinski
 "Writers on Writing" - Collection of essays from *The New York Times*
 "The Tools of Screenwriting: A Writer's Guide to the Craft and Elements of a Screenplay"
 by David Howard and Ed Mabley (for the film analyses)

Topics and Methodology:

Brief, pertinent lectures, group discussion and critique, and individual conferences addressed to the needs of each student and his or her material.

Students will need to email or mail the scripts they plan to rewrite to the B.U. in L.A. Office Coordinator, a minimum of 2 weeks before the Fall semester begins.

(WIH2 continued)

Special Events:

Studio tours, museum visits, Industry events, screenings, symposiums, etc. may be scheduled throughout the semester. All sessions are mandatory unless otherwise noted.

Copying Fee:

PLEASE NOTE: There is a \$25 copying fee that will cover some, if not all, of your copying costs. Please contact Program Coordinator Rebecca Gimple if you have questions regarding payment.

Email Access:

Daily access to email is essential - we do have 4 office computers w/internet available for use, but your own laptop or computer is essential. You'll find free broadband internet access in all Park La Brea apts. and the BU in LA office.

BU in LA office login info:

Login: BUinLA

Password: BULA2006

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

Here is a schedule, including assignments, which is a flexible structure and may change. It is based on a feature page count and 3-Act structure, *which will be altered accordingly to fit the development process, act structure and page count of television scripts.*

Class one - 8/31: Introductions; course Q and A; overview of character and choice of material. Discuss students' story ideas, what they think they "got right" in the 1st drafts, and what they want to accomplish in the new draft.

Assignment: Present main problems of current drafts. Written bios of lead and secondary characters (including active wants) that include changes or adjustments; a statement of principle conflicts in story.

Class two - 9/8 *Tuesday: Discuss problems and possible fixes.

Topics: Greater depth in character development, leading to natural (vs. imposed) changes in structure; inciting incidents.

Assignment: Begin a scene list which in effect will become your outline. A brief, specific description of the opening and closing scenes of Acts 1 and 2. List first 10 scenes in Act 1.

(WIH2 continued)

Class three - 9/14: Discuss conflicts; openings and closings of Acts.

Topics: Secondary characters -- subplots and complications.

Assignment: Complete list of scenes for Act 1, and begin scene lists for Acts 2 & 3. Brief specific description of Act 3 opening and closing.

Class four - 9/21: Discuss outlines and Act 3 breaks.

Topics: Midpoints and twists.

Assignment: Complete Act 2 outline. Work on Act 3 outline. Bring in opening scene of screenplay to read in class.

Class five - 9/28: Workshop opening scenes.

Topics: Dynamic openings and Act breaks.

Assignment: Complete outline of Act 3. Bring in next scene of screenplay.

Class six - 10/5: Workshop 2nd scene; Discuss main tension in Act 3. Changes in outlines.

Topic: Biggest obstacles for leads; antagonists.

Assignment: 3rd scene of screenplay. Revised outline.

Class seven - 10/13 *Tuesday: Discuss changes in stories; workshop scenes.

Topics: Dialogue and subtext; Dialogue vs. behavior -- using what characters say as opposed to what they do.

Assignment: 10 pages. Bring in midpoint scenes.

Class eight - 10/19: Workshop midpoint scenes.

Topic: Scene transitions through imagery and dialogue.

Assignment: 10 pages. Complete or come close to completing Act 1.

Class nine - 10/26: Workshop new sequences at end of Act 1.

Topic: What attracts an actor to a role? Giving them "room to act".

Assignment: First 12 - 15 pages in Act 2.

Class ten - 11/2: Workshop Act 2 openings.

Topic: How characters' "wants" may change in each Act.

Assignment: 12-15 pages. Bring in crucial sequence between Act 2 opening & midpoint.

(WIH2 continued)

(GRADES continued)

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS	65
BULA EVENTS	10
FINAL PITCHES	15
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS & PERCENTAGES.....	100

70 and below is failing

71 and above is passing

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT:

Plagiarism is the act of representing someone else's creative and/or academic work as your own, in full or in part. It can be an act of commission, in which one intentionally appropriates the words, pictures, or ideas of another, or it can be an act of omission, in which one fails to acknowledge/document/give credit to the source, creator, and/or the copyright owner of those words, pictures, or ideas. Any fabrication of materials, quotes, or sources, other than those created in a work of fiction, is also plagiarism.

Plagiarism is the most serious academic offense that you can commit and can result in probation, suspension, or expulsion.

"Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated. Any kind of academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will result in the filing of academic misconduct charges. Any suspicious act/material/etc. will be investigated to the fullest extent possible and those found guilty will be punished accordingly. BE SURE TO READ AND COMPLY WITH BOSTON UNIVERSITY'S UNIVERSAL ACADEMIC CONDUCT CODE. It is available at: bu.edu/academics"