

Fall 8-15-2018

ENG 4764-001: Advanced Drama Writing

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ENGLISH 4764: Advanced Dramatic Writing (3 credits): Fall 2018

Dr. Olga Abella
3325 Coleman (6297)

Office Hours: TR 12:30-2, F 11-1
and by appointment.

I. **TEXTS:**

Screenplay: Writing the Picture [SWP]

Take Ten II [TTII]

The Best Ten-Minute Plays 2014 [TBTP]

The Dramatic Writer's Companion [TDWC]

Writing Short Films [WSF]

simplyscripts.com (free screenplays and movie scripts)

sfy.ru (free screenplays and movie scripts)

shortoftheweek.com/channels/student-films/

(free screenwriting program)

II. **ASSIGNMENTS** (with appropriate grade % for each):

1. **5 Dramatic Writings:** You will write **FOUR 10-Minute Plays (THREE on your own, ONE in collaboration with your group members) (48%)**, and **ONE short Screenplay (10-30 mins) (17%)** that you will have worked on during the semester. With each play you will also need to turn in the various drafts, including the very first one, along with the final, finished draft. The different drafts will enable me to evaluate the progress you have made for each work. We will discuss all of these in a workshop format in class, and **each work will be due 1 week after it has been work-shopped. (65%)**
2. **Journals.** This will be a log of your responses to the readings you will be doing throughout the semester from the course texts. To be a writer, you must be a reader. In order to know what you think and feel, you must know what and how others think and feel—and how they express those ideas and emotions. Writers do not live in isolation. They are always learning from each other. “We discover who we are and what we have to say through life and dialogue with others” (Catherine Hobbs). Therefore, you must read, and think about what you read. **At the top of each entry you must write the work's title, writer's name, book's name, and page#.** For each play, you will first write your initial thoughts/reactions/feelings and then reflect more fully on various elements of the play, such as details, character, dialogue, point of view, tone, scene, plot. By looking at the plays more closely, at the parts that appealed or did not appeal to you, you will learn how to craft better your own writing. In this journal, you are studying other writers' plays to understand better what makes a play work well. By being a more careful **reader** of plays, you will become a better **writer** of plays, and you will also learn to edit your writing with a more objective eye. The **journal will be collected 3 times** during the semester, and a final grade will be given at the end. **(20%)**
3. **Participation:** The main focus of this class is **your** writing. We will spend the semester discussing and critiquing your writing in a workshop format. Your response to one another's work is a crucial part of class. As each other's audience, you **must provide feedback** for the plays and screenplay presented in class. You will also **need to provide the class a copy of each play you will workshop—you need to email the class a copy no later than the class prior to the one when you present. (15%)**

III. **COURSE PURPOSE:** We will begin the class by examining plays written by published modern and contemporary writers in order to learn how to discuss plays and to develop a critical sense of what makes them good according to contemporary standards, as well as personal taste. Then we will turn our attention to plays written by you, or in collaboration, and performed by your group, and examine them in the same way. The purpose of the class is to help you become a better writer by reading the works of established writers and understanding what makes their plays successful, and by giving you specific exercises to help you understand what to avoid doing as well as what to do to make your plays succeed (such as developing convincing characters and dialogue). In other words, in this class you are writing so that others can connect with what you want to say. You are here to create texts that will mean something to others and not just to you.

IV. **ATTENDANCE:** If you don't come to class, there basically is no class, since class is about your writing and your comments about your classmates' writing. **Having more than 3 unexcused absences will result in a failing participation grade.**

V. **LATE WORK:** All assignments are due on the dates specified. Lateness will result in a lower grade. If you cannot complete an assignment on time, you must see me **before** it is due.

VI. **FINAL NOTES:**

- 1) **Students with disabilities**—If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.
- 2) **Academic integrity**—Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct. (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.
- 3) **The Student Success Center**—Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (<http://www.eiu.edu/~success>) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

4764.001, Abella: Course Calendar:

- Aug 21 Introduction
23 **Playwriting**: [TTII] p. vii-ix; [TBTP] Foreword p. 11-12; [WSF] Chapter 1; Kate Toon (handout); K.T. Craig (handout); "The Art of the Ten-Minute Play" (handout); Sam Graber (handout); EM Welsh (handout); [TDWC] p. xv-xxi; *Love Poem* (handout)
- 28 [SWP] p. 93-110; [TDWC] p. 199-220; [TTII] *Emotional Baggage*, p. 99; *It's Not You*, p. 153; *Daniel On A Thursday*, p. 47; *The Sniper*, p. 315
30 continue discussing readings
- Sept 4 Discussions: #1: *Baggage Unattended*; #2: *The Chocolate Affair*; #3: *Quick Trip*
6 #4: *The Long Island Ice Tea*; #5: *The Big Ride*
- 11 workshop (3 plays)
13 workshop (3 plays)
- 18 workshop (4 plays); **[End of First Round]**
20 workshop (3 plays); **JOURNALS DUE (4 plays)**
- 25 workshop (3 plays);
27 workshop (4 plays); **[End of Second Round]**
- Oct 2 in-class writing exercise
4 workshop (3 plays)
- 9 workshop (3 plays)
11 workshop (4 plays); **[End of Third Round]**
- 16 in-class writing exercise
18
- 23 workshop (3 plays: Collaboration); **[End of Fourth Round]**
25 **JOURNALS DUE (4 plays)**
- 30 **Screenplay Writing**: [WSP] Chapter 2; *Writing and Re-writing a Short Film* (handout); other handouts; *Getting It* (email); *Wrestling Is Real* (email);
- Nov 1 *Jack & Maude* (email); *Stuck* (email); *The Bus Driver* (email); *The Park* (email)
- 6 in-class writing
8
- 13 workshop (2 screenplays)
15 workshop (2 screenplays)
- 20 Thanksgiving Break
22 Thanksgiving Break
- 27 workshop (2 screenplays)
29 workshop (2 screenplays); **JOURNALS DUE (2 screenplays)**
- Dec 4 workshop (2 screenplays)
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