ENG 2005-001: Dramatic Writing

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a workshop designed to introduce students to the art and craft of writing for stage and screen. The course will focus on the genre of horror. We will examine the basic principles of dramatic structure using the primary elements of story, plot, character, and setting as defined by Aristotle's *Poetics*. Additionally, this class will read and discuss texts on the art of writing for performance. Students will become familiar with the general guiding elements of dramatic structure and character development for storytelling through practical exercises. This is a writing-intensive course.

SUBMISSIONS OF WRITING FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

**WEEKLY WRITING** assignments must be submitted to D2L no later than midnight on the evening prior to scheduled due date. A printed or electronic copy will be required in class on scheduled due date. These are graded as Pass/Fail.

**STAGE & SCREEN PLAYS** (at least 20 pages) for workshop will be submitted 36 hours prior to scheduled workshop date via email to the class. Formatting is essential. You will not be graded on your raw talent as a writer per se. You will be graded on the clarity of your story, how well you integrate useful comments into your play, how honest your storytelling is, how theatrical or cinematic your play is. Plays must be producible and theatrical and must follow the standard script formats. File name must include your name.

**GRADES (on D2L)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Assignments</th>
<th>30%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Portfolio</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final Portfolio due in electronic format (PDF) due by 1pm, May 9, 2014.

**PARTICIPATION** in bi-weekly and final conferences with Professor is required to check-in for understanding and for class participation credit. You are responsible for scheduling conferences with Professor. These may be conducted via Skype.

**JOURNALS** on D2L must be kept with weekly brainstorming, free and reflective writing.

**GENERAL RULES & GUIDELINES**

Office: Coleman Hall 3562  Email: rmquesada@eiu.edu
Office Hours: MW 12 – 1pm & 2 – 3pm & by Appt. via Skype: skype.quesada

Spring 2014
Students are expected to write and revise a stage play and a screen play. Students will use principles learned to read and criticize their work in order to help each other during workshops to produce and revise plays.

A final portfolio of each thoroughly revised play of at least 30 pages each will be submitted at the end of the course. In-person scheduled conferences with instructor will be required during the final week of instruction in place of class. **Workshops will be conducted by letter assignments, i.e., A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, etc.**

**Due dates are non-negotiable.** Assignments will not be available to complete after due date scheduled on syllabus.

**Class attendance is mandatory.** If you have more than two unexcused absences, it will result in a **reduction of one grade** from your final course evaluation. The only way an absence can be excused is with medical documentation.

**Adaptations of other written material are not allowed.** All written material submitted for this class must be your original work.

**Proofread your assignments. Format correctly.** Spelling and grammatical errors will influence grades. Use a good dictionary/thesaurus and do not rely on a computer spell-checker program.

**Reading student writing, textbook assignments, and online handouts is a course requirement.**

**Viewing/reading assigned films and plays is a course requirement.**

**Students are expected to participate in class discussions.**

**READING:**

**Digital:**

*A Slip in Time* (stage), T. James Belich  
*Turn of the Screw* (stage), James L. Seay  
*The Woman in Black* (screen), Jane Goldman  
Tierno, Michael. *Aristotle's Poetics for Screenwriters: Storytelling Secrets From the Greatest Mind in Western Civilization.*

**Print:**

Fletcher, Lucille. *Sorry, Wrong Number and The Hitch-Hiker*  
Quiara Alegria Hudes. *Water by the Spoonful.* (Do not use):
Robin Russin, William Missouri Downs. *Naked Playwriting: The Art, the Craft, and the Life Laid Bare.*

**STAGE:**


**FILM:**

*Sorry, Wrong Number* (1948)
*House on Haunted Hill* (1959)
*Psycho* (1960)
*The Haunting* (1963)
*Rosemary's Baby* (1968)
*Night of the Living Dead* (1968)
*The Exorcist* (1973)
*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1974)
*Halloween* (1978)
*The Amityville Horror* (1979)
*Friday, the 13th* (1980)
*The Shining* (1980)
*Poltergeist* (1982)
*A Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984)
*Hellraiser* (1987)

*The Silence of the Lambs* (1991)
*Scream* (1996)
*From Hell* (2001)
*The Others* (2001)
*The Devil's Backbone* (2001)
*Dark Water* (2005)
*Paranormal Activity* (2007)
*The Orphanage* (2007)
*The Strangers* (2008)
*Insidious* (2011)
*The Woman in Black* (2012)
*Insidious 2* (2013)
*The Conjuring* (2013)

**TELEVISION:**

“The Hitch-Hiker” *The Twilight Zone*, Season 1, Episode 16 (1960)
“Mirror Image” *The Twilight Zone*, Season 1, Episode 21 (1960)
“The After Hours” *The Twilight Zone*, Season 1, Episode 34 (1960)
“Twenty Two” *The Twilight Zone*, Season 2, Episode 53 (1961)
“Long Distance Call” *The Twilight Zone*, Season 2, Episode 58 (1961)
“The Dummy” *The Twilight Zone*, Season 3, Episode 98 (1962)
“The New Exhibit” *The Twilight Zone*, Season 4, Episode 115 (1963)
“Normal Again” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Season 6, Episode 17 (2002)
“Episode 1” *In the Flesh*, Season 1, Episode 1 (2013)
“Episode 2” *In the Flesh*, Season 1, Episode 2 (2013)
“Episode 3” *In the Flesh*, Season 1, Episode 3 (2013)
“Identity” *Law & Order: SVU*, Season 6, Episode 12 (01/18/2005)
“Possessed” *Law & Order: SVU*, Season 12, Episode 12 (01/05/2011)
“Burn, Witch, Burn!” *American Horror Story*, Season 3, Episode 5 (11/06/2013)
“Unholy Night” *American Horror Story*, Season 2, Episode 8 (12/05/2012)
“Days Gone Bye” *The Walking Dead*, Season 1, Episode 1 (10/31/2010)
“Are You There, God? It’s Me, Dean Winchester” *Supernatural*, Season 4, Episode 2 (09/25/2008)
“Lucifer Rising” *Supernatural*, Season 4, Episode 22 (05/14/2009)

*Policy on Respect:* We need to be respectful of one another. Among other things, this means that you are expected to listen respectfully to other students and me when we are speaking and to speak about the work of others with respect. This does not mean being dishonestly positive with commentary, but try to understand that we are all learning. Comments that might be taken by reasonable people to be insulting, especially in regards to gender, race, religion, age, and sexual preference, aren’t welcome here. There may be disagreements in class, but when these disagreements touch on issues of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc., we need to be respectful of our differences, even as we are emphatic in our positions.
Student Support Services: EIU's Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS) is committed to facilitating the provision of equal access and opportunity to all campus programs and services for students with disabilities. Contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (217-581-6583) as early in the term as possible if you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations.

Student Success Center: EIU's Student Success Center provides comprehensive programs and holistic services designed to empower students and to connect them with the resources needed to achieve both academic and personal goals. To schedule a consulting appointment, please call 217-581-6696. All consulting appointments are in the Student Success Center, 1301 9th Street Hall.

Plagiarism Policy: Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – 'the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to Student Standards. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources. Plagiarism means taking the words or ideas of another person and passing them off as your own. To avoid it, take special care when using outside sources (including Internet sites): if you incorporate such material into your work, you must follow MLA Guidelines. Final action may result in permanent University expulsion.
STAGE PLAY

January 13 - 17, 2014
M  PRINCIPLES, DISCUSSION
W  DRAMATIC ELEMENTS
F  PLAYWRITING IDEAS (exercise #1)

January 20 - 24, 2014  *1/20 MLK Day - University Closed
W  DIALOGUE (exercise #1 - 3)
F  No Class. Attend Lions in Winter. Complete CHARACTER QUESTIONNAIRE #1

January 27 - 31, 2014
M  PLOT (exercise #1)
W  SCENES (exercise #1 - 3)
F  STORY QUESTIONNAIRE #1

February 3 - 7, 2014
M  Nature of Horror & Plotting Horror (Carroll)
W  The Hitch-Hiker & Sorry, Wrong Number (Fletcher)
F  Workshop (A, B)

February 10 - 14, 2014  *1/14 Lincoln’s Bday - University Closed
M  Workshop (C, D)
W  Workshop (E, F)

February 17 - 21, 2014
M  Workshop (G, H)
W  Workshop (I, J)
F  Workshop (K, L)

February 24 - 28, 2014  *2/26 - 2/28 - No Class (AWP)
M  Workshop (M, N)

SCREEN PLAY

March 3 - 7, 2014  *3/6 - Midterm (Evaluate Macbeth* at Doudna)
M  Workshop (O), & Aristotle for Screenwriters
W  SCENE ELEMENTS/SEVEN DAY SCHEDULE (in-class/small groups)
F  THE FIRST TEN PAGES

March 10 - 14, 2014  - Spring Break

March 17 - 21, 2014
M  STORY QUESTIONNAIRE #2
W  CHARACTER QUESTIONNAIRE #2
F  CHARACTER (exercise #1 - 2)
March 24 - 28, 2014
M CHARACTER (exercise #3 - 4)
W SCENE (exercise #4)
F SCENE (exercise #5)

March 31 - April 4, 2014
M SCENE (exercise #6)
W BEAT SHEETS (in-class/small groups)
F Workshop (N, O)

April 7 - 11, 2014
M Workshop (L, M)
W Workshop (J, K)
F Workshop (H, I)

April 14 - 18, 2014 *4/18 No Class (PCA)
M VCR 11:00am (mandatory attendance)
W Small Groups Revision Plan Discussions (Groups A - C, D - F, G - I, J - L, M - O)

April 21 - 25, 2014
M Workshop (F, G)
W Workshop (D, E)
F Workshop (B, C)

April 28 - May 2, 2014
M Workshop (A), & Final Conferences (K - O)
W Final Conferences (F - J)
F Final Conferences (A - E)

May 5 - 9, 2014 - Finals Week

Final Portfolio due in electronic format (PDF) due by 1pm, May 9, 2014.

Final Portfolio consists of two previously discussed manuscripts. Manuscripts include 30 pages of revised/edited STAGE PLAY AND 30 pages of revised/edited SCREEN PLAY. Total page count, at least 60 pages of scene/dialogue.