

Coffeyville Community College

#THTR-200
COURSE SYLLABUS
FOR
PLAYWRITING

Mark Frank
Instructor

COURSE NUMBER: THTR-200 **COURSE TITLE:** Playwriting

CREDIT HOURS: 3

INSTRUCTOR: Mark Frank

OFFICE LOCATION: 170 Arts and Science Building

PHONE: 251-7700 ext. 2145

OFFICE HOURS: See posted schedule on office door

PREREQUISITE: None

**REQUIRED TEXT
AND MATERIALS:**

The Playwright's Process by Buzz McLaughlin
A Collection of Plays by Mark Frank by Mark Frank
Notebook

**COURSE
DESCRIPTION:**

This course is an introductory class for beginning and experienced writers of plays for theatre majors and those students studying to be playwrights. Students will learn specific techniques, practical exercises, candid exploration of famous plays, and methods from award winning playwrights during the course of this class. This course is designed to work with the basic building blocks of dramatic structure, study the exploration of developing character, analyze the elements of good dialogue writing, research the different methods of how to get plays published and explore different marketing tools to make a play a best seller. A playwright's recital of original work from the class will be held during finals and open to the public.

**EXPECTED LEARNER
OUTCOMES:**

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Formulate different dramatic idea's
2. Identify how to state your dramatic premise
3. Research idea's for plays.
4. Analyze the play idea worksheet.
5. Explore different types of character.
6. Develop the backstory of a play.
7. Create the working drawings of a play
8. Recognize working in the standard format of a play.
9. Understand how to bring an original script to life.
10. Develop your first draft.

11. Understand the rewriting process.
12. Research publication and marketing techniques of an original play.

**LEARNING TASKS
& ACTIVITIES:**

Unit I: Formulating Idea's
Unit II: Writing the first draft
Unit III: Publication and marketing of a play.

**ASSESSMENT OF
OUTCOMES:**

All assignments are expected to be completed by the due date. Work is never accepted late. All directions must be followed. Grading scale is as follows.

90-100 = A
80- 89 = B
70- 79 = C
60- 69 = D
0- 59 = F

Most assignments will be in-class activities and participation exercises.

The final grade will be based upon the following: script analysis, final draft of script, and script reading.

**ATTENDANCE
POLICY:**

Students are expected to attend all classes. It is the responsibility of the student to make definite arrangements with the instructor for make-up work BEFORE going on field trips or other college-sponsored events. Class periods, assignments, and tests that are missed without prior arrangements with the instructor may not be made-up unless unusual circumstances prevail and at the instructor's prerogative.

You are awarded 100 points if you do not miss more than 3 class periods unexcused during the semester. Absences are considered excused if the student makes definite arrangements with the instructor for make-up work BEFORE going on field trips or other college sponsored events. A note from your doctor may also be considered an excused absence if you are seriously ill and miss many classes. Calling to let the instructor know you are absent does not constitute an EXCUSED absence. *REMEMBER YOU ARE ALLOWED 3 ABSENCES DURING THE SEMESTER TO ACHIEVE YOUR 100 POINTS. AFTER YOUR THIRD ABSENCE YOU FORFEIT ALL YOUR ATTENDANCE

POINTS! IF YOU MISS MORE THAN FOUR CLASSES YOU WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE CLASS. (This 100 points is figured into your grade total.)

***Being late twice is considered an absence.**

0-3	100 pts.	A
4		B
5		C
6		D
7		F

The institution's attendance policy states:

"It is the responsibility of students to make definite arrangements for all work before going on field trips or other college-sponsored trips. School-sponsored activities will be counted as excused absences providing the following criteria are observed:

1. The student must complete all of the necessary assignments at least three days prior to the absence, or at a time designated by the instructor.
2. At least three days prior to the absence the activity sponsor must provide the instructor with a list of students who are excused.
3. Excused absences are to include academic competition, music events, official athletic events, field trips, convocations, and other college-sponsored events as approved the by the Dean of Academic Services."

*All absences and tardies will be reported on the Early Academic Warning System

**COURSE
SCHEDULE:**

Week 1
Syllabus
Chapter 1
Writing exercise

Week 2
Chapter 2
Writing Exercise: Fairy Tale

Week 3
Chapter 3
Writing Exercise: Picture

Week 4
Chapter 3
Writing Exercise: Word Play

Week 5
Chapter 4
Analyze Play: Pulitzer

Week 6
Chapter 5
Analyze Play: Pulitzer

Week 7
Chapter 1-5 Review
Rough Drafts Due of Ten Minute One-Act

Week 8
Midterm Test Chapters 1-5
Read Drafts in Class

Week 9
Chapter 6
Corrected Drafts Due

Week 10
Chapter 7
Mapping Drafts

Week 11
Chapter 8
Mapping Drafts

Week 12
Chapter 8
Mapping Drafts

Week 13
Chapter 9
Revised Drafts Due

Week 14
Chapter 10
Revised Drafts Read

Week 15

Review Chapters 1-10
Revised Drafts Read

Week 16

Written Final Chapters 1-10
Revised Drafts Read

Week 17

Final
Performance Final of Final Draft of Script

COMPETENCIES:

FORMULATE DIFFERENT DRAMATIC IDEA'S

1. Recognize different guidelines of playwriting. (Synthesis)
2. Define the Basic dramatic ingredients of playwriting. (Knowledge)
3. Arrange your ideas down on paper. (Analysis)

IDENTIFY HOW TO STATE YOUR DRAMATIC PREMISE

1. Define your premise by writing it out. (Knowledge)
2. Examine your flexibility of ideas. (Knowledge)
3. Compare and contrast negative and positive premises. (Comprehension/Analysis)
4. Examine how premise controls the whole play. (Knowledge)
5. Illustrate the personal statement of a premise. (Application)
6. Judge your premise. (Evaluation)

RESEARCH IDEA'S FOR PLAYS

1. Discover the mystery well of idea's. (Application)
2. Analyze the writer's paradox. (Analysis)
3. Formulate making the play world your own. (Synthesis)
4. Examine tapping into your emotional reality. (Knowledge)
5. Examine the whole idea. (Knowledge)
6. Support the potential of settings. (Evaluation)
7. Support the use of occasions. (Evaluations)
8. Design using real people as models. (Synthesis)
9. Analyze the risk of self exposure. (Analysis)
10. Complete a journal. (Application)
11. Examine hunches through writing. (Knowledge)
12. Measure the test of time. (Evaluation)

ANALYZE THE PLAY IDEA WORKSHEET

1. Analyze getting down to the basics. (Analysis)
2. Analyze your favorite plays. (Analysis)
3. Arrange and classify your own ideas. (Analysis)

EXPLORE DIFFERENT TYPES OF CHARACTERS

1. Describe the short form Biography. (Comprehension)
2. Examine what is in a name. (Knowledge)
3. Examine your character's physical characteristics. (Knowledge)
4. Examine your character's external world. (Knowledge)
5. Examine your character's internal world. (Knowledge)
6. Identify how to use the short form. (Knowledge)

DEVELOP THE BACKSTORY OF THE PLAY

1. Describe the long form Biography. (Comprehension)
2. Explain the rewards of patience. (Analysis)
3. Experiment exploring with dialogue. (Application)
4. Experiment with a character timeline. (Application)
5. Analyze those unturned ideas. (Analysis)
6. Modify making adjustments to dialogue. (Application)

CREATE THE WORKING DRAWINGS OF A PLAY

1. Complete a structural framework of a play. (Application)
2. Illustrate finding a play in your story. (Application)
3. Analyze a three-act play structure. (Analysis)
4. Analyze the (master's) professional playwrights. (Analysis)
5. Experiment with inventing plot. (Application)
6. Explain the dramatic intensity curve. (Analysis)
7. Examine plot treatment. (Knowledge)
8. Examine the spontaneity factor. (Knowledge)

RECOGNIZE WORKING IN THE STANDARD PLAY FORMAT

1. Explain the importance of presentation. (Analysis)
2. Illustrate the various formats. (Application)
3. List the elements of the standard format. (Knowledge)
4. Discuss assembling the script. (Comprehension)
5. Discuss getting familiar with the format. (Comprehension)

UNDERSTAND HOW TO BRING AN ORIGINAL SCRIPT TO LIFE

1. Explain the art of carrot dangling. (Analysis)
2. Examine how to get inside of a play. (Knowledge)
3. Discuss the architecture of conversation. (Comprehension)
4. Describe plausible mechanics. (Comprehension)
5. Define incorporating objects. (Knowledge)
6. Discuss the finesse of stage directions. (Comprehension)
7. Identify the phrase "The lights coming up". (Knowledge)
8. Label stage directions. (Knowledge)
9. Experiment with different spaces. (Application)
10. Discuss crying tears and losing it. (Comprehension)
11. Examine directors who ignore stage directions. (Application)
12. Compare and contrast reality versus illusion. (Analysis & Comprehension)
13. Experiment practicing the craft of playwriting. (Application)

DEVELOP YOUR FIRST DRAFT

1. Discover a title that works. (Application)
2. Examine starting out. (Knowledge)
3. Discuss discipline. (Comprehension)
4. Discuss battling that negative voice. (Comprehension)
5. Discuss keeping it to yourself. (Comprehension)
6. Explain “Pushing through”. (Analysis)
7. Explain :Getting some distance”. (Analysis)

UNDERSTANDING THE REWRITING PROCESS

1. Examine re-establishing contact. (Application)
2. Examine the basic rewriting principles. (Knowledge)
3. Discuss the difference between screen and page. (Comprehension)
4. Examine another look at your title. (Knowledge)
5. Define “Scanning”. (Knowledge)
6. Define which draft this is. (Knowledge)
7. Examine how to publish your play. (Application)
8. Discuss the rewriting cycle. (Comprehension)

RESEARCH PUBLICATION AND MARKETING TECHNIQUE OF AN ORIGINAL PLAY

1. Define the initial warning. (Knowledge)
2. Discuss how the buck stops with you. (Comprehension)
3. Examine the shift from New York. (Knowledge)
4. Discuss when to start publishing. (Comprehension)
5. Discuss how to submit. (Comprehension)
6. Examine what happens on the other end. (Knowledge)
7. Define the table reading. (Knowledge)
8. Define the public sit down reading. (Knowledge)
9. Examine the sit down reading. (Application)
10. Examine rewrites during rehearsals. (Application)
11. Discuss how many readings. (Comprehension)
12. Discuss the workshop production. (Comprehension)
13. Discuss the full production. (Comprehension)
14. Analyze when you need an agent. (Analysis)
15. Examine developing and maintaining contacts. (Knowledge)
16. Discuss the art of waiting. (Comprehension)
17. Define the Dramatist Guild. (Knowledge)
18. Discuss different ways to market your play. (Comprehension)

This syllabus is subject to revision with prior notification to the student by the instructor.