

THFM-2701-001 (6 credit hours)

## PLAYWRITING I

FW 2013-14  
TuTh: 11:30 am-12:45 pm  
Room OT19

Instructor: Hope McIntyre  
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Office Hours: W 13:20-14:20pm  
and by appointment

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Rather than treating plays as literature, this course will introduce students to the craft of playwriting by focusing on the building blocks of action, character, dialogue, conflict, plot, structure, as well as notions of obstacle, event, circumstance and place. Beginning with creation exercises, students will work through a process of writing an outline, a first draft, a short shot (10 min. play), and finally a one-act play (30-45 minutes).

Students' work will be read and discussed in class; from this process assignments for further development will be given.

### TEXTS

Ball, David. *Backwards and Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays*

#### **Recommended reading:**

Egri, Lajos. *The Art of Dramatic Writing*

Martini, Clem. *The Blunt Playwright: An Introduction to Playwriting*

Students will also encouraged to read and attend plays that will serve as examples of specific principles.

### MARK DISTRIBUTION

Short Shot (due November 26)	25%
Outline of One-Act Play (due February 13)	25%
Second draft of One-Act Play (due April 10)	40%
Class Participation	10%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Since the effectiveness of this class is dependent on full participation, absences not due to documented medical reasons will lead to deductions in the final mark. Unexcused absences will be penalized at a rate of 1% per instance. Unexcused lateness for lecture, lab, or out-of-class rehearsal will be penalized at a rate of .5% per instance. Attendance and punctuality will be recorded at the beginning of every class. After having missed 5 classes a meeting will occur to discuss whether the student should withdraw.

Late Assignments will **NOT** be accepted.

All work submitted for evaluation must be either typed or text processed. E-mail submissions will not be accepted.

### CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class participation includes:

- preparation
- meeting outlined deadlines for in-class activities
- participation in class activities and discussions
- demonstrated commitment to the course and work in class

### CONVERSION SCALE

For the calculation of the final grade the following conversion table will be used:

A+	90 – 100%	GPA	4.5	C+	65 – 69.9%	GPA	2.5
A	85 – 89.9%	GPA	4.25	C	60 – 64.9%	GPA	2.0
A-	80 – 84.9%	GPA	4.0	D	50 – 59.9%	GPA	1.0
B+	75 – 79.9%	GPA	3.5	F	below 50%	GPA	0
B	70 – 74.9%	GPA	3.0				

Work not submitted will be graded as 0%

### **DEFINITIONS OF GRADING DESCRIPTIONS**

**A+ Exceptional.** Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques and exceptional skill **AND** great originality in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

**A Superior.** Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques and exceptional skill **OR** great originality in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

**A- Excellent.** Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with a high degree of skill and/or some elements of originality in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

**B+ Very Good.** Thorough knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with a fairly high degree of skill in the use of those concepts/techniques in satisfying the requirements of an assignment or course.

**B Good.** Good level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with considerable skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

**C+ Competent.** Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with considerable skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

**C Fairly Competent.** Acceptable level of knowledge of concepts and/or techniques together with some skill in using them to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

**D Barely Passing.** Minimum knowledge of concepts and/or techniques needed to satisfy the requirements of an assignment or course.

**F Failing.**

### **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (subject to change)**

Every class will focus on student writing, feedback to same, and assignments for further development. The schedule below is meant to be a guide but will be adjusted if greater time is required for reading of students' work or discussion.

#### **Fall Term:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>CLASS ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
September 3/5	Course Intro / Free Flow writing	
September 10/12	Character in Action	Written monologue
September 17/19	Character in Action cont'd	
September 24/26	Dialogue in Action	Two-hander scene
October 1/3	Dialogue in Action cont'd	
October 8/10	Plot	Read <i>Backwards and Forwards</i>
October 15/17	Plot cont'd	
October 22/24	Dramatic Action/Conflict	Conflict-based scene
October 29/31	Structure – Beginnings/Middle	First two pages of Short Shot for reading
November 5/7	Structure – Endings	

November 12/14	Readings from short shot drafts	Short Shot draft due
November 19/21	Pitfalls/Challenges	Short Shot revisions
November 26	Short Shot readings	Short Shot due
December 10	One-on-One interviews*	

\*For midterm "one-on-one" interviews, every student will be asked to sign up for a 20-minute slot in order to receive feedback on their scripts. If arrangements need to be made for an appointment on another date, please speak to the instructor well in advance.

#### Winter Term:

DATE	CLASS ACTIVITY	DEADLINE
January 7/9	Short Shots feedback/discussion	
January 14/16	Reading of scenes/discussion	Scenes from One-Act
	<b>JANUARY 21 WITHDRAWAL DATE</b>	
January 19/21	Reading of scenes/discussion	Scenes from One-Act
January 28/30	Reading of scenes/discussion	Scenes from One-Act
February 4/6	Reading of scenes/discussion	Scenes from One-Act
February 11/13	Reading of scenes/discussion	Feb. 13 – outline due
February 17-22	<b>Reading Week – NO CLASSES</b>	
February 25/27	Reading of scenes/discussion	Scenes from One-Act
March 4/6	Reading of scenes/discussion	Scenes from One-Act
March 11/13	Readings from one-act drafts	One-Act – first draft due
March 18/20	Readings from one-act drafts	
March 25/27	Discussion of drafts/rewriting principles	
April 1/3	Readings of rewrites/ Business of playwriting	Rewritten scenes from One-Act
April 10		One-Act Play due
April 18	One on One interviews*	

\*For final "one-on-one" interviews, every student will be asked to sign up for a 20-minute slot in order to receive feedback on their scripts. If arrangements need to be made for an appointment on another date, please speak to the instructor well in advance.

#### **"THE REAL THING" LECTURE SERIES**

The Department of Theatre and Film is presenting a series of six lectures which will be held on Wednesdays during the free period (12:30-13:20) in Theatre 1T15. Please note the dates in your diary **NOW**: Sept 18, Oct 23, Nov 13, Jan 15, Feb 12, Mar 12. This series will feature speakers from a range of areas in the performing arts: technical, performance, design, management, film, directing, playwriting, etc. These speakers will specifically address issues related to "the business of the business."

Attendance for potential Theatre Honours/majors and for Film majors is optional but highly recommended.

#### **ORIENTATION ASSEMBLY**

Each year in September we hold an *Orientation Assembly* to introduce our new students to faculty and other students; to provide information about the department, its various activities and those of its professors; and to provide news about what's coming up. This year our *Orientation Assembly* will be held on **Wednesday, September 11, 2013, 12:30-13:20 in Theatre, 1T15. ATTENDANCE IS COMPULSORY** for all Majors and Honours students. Those considering Honours are strongly recommended to attend. All others are welcome and encouraged to attend.

## **SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with documented disabilities, temporary or chronic medical conditions, requiring academic accommodations for tests/exams (e.g., private space) or during lectures/laboratories (e.g., access to volunteer note-takers) are encouraged to contact Accessibility Services (AS) at 786-9771 or email [accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:accessibilityservices@uwinnipeg.ca) to discuss appropriate options. Specific information about AS is available on-line at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/accessibility>. All information about a student's disability or medical condition remains confidential.

## **BUILDING SECURITY**

The Asper Centre for Theatre and Film (which houses the Department of Theatre and Film) is open from 8:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. weekdays. Students are permitted to be in the building between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. seven days per week (except statutory holidays when the University is closed) **BUT PLEASE NOTE:** outside of regular building hours, it is **MANDATORY** that everyone in the building **EITHER** carry an access card **OR** have a booking confirmation form in their possession (hard copy or electronic). **ALL EVENING STUDENTS in the building for classes MUST have an access card.** If a Security Guard checks and you do not have proper accreditation, **you may be evicted.**

These rules are in place to protect our students and our equipment; please respect them.

## **ELECTRONIC COURSE OUTLINE ADDENDA**

Students must check our website at <http://theatre.uwinnipeg.ca/tbooking.htm> and read the menu items called *Access Card/Building Use Policy AND Room Booking Instructions*. The link to the electronic *Online Room Booking Form* is also found at this location. Please read and note all instructions carefully.

## **GENERAL NOTES**

This course outline should be considered a guideline only. Time constraints and other unforeseen factors may require that some topics be omitted or covered in less detail than indicated.

Archival records such as videotapes, sound recordings, and photographs may be made or taken during class or lab times. The University uses such materials primarily for archival, promotional, and teaching purposes. Promotional use may include display at open houses or conferences, or use in advertising, publicity, or brochures. In reading and accepting the terms in this course outline, students acknowledge consent for such use by the University. Should a student not wish to convey such consent, s/he should withdraw from this course immediately.

The University of Winnipeg promotes a scent-free environment. Please be respectful of the needs of fellow classmates and the instructor by avoiding the use of scented products while attending lectures. Exposure to perfumes and other scented products (such as lotion) can trigger serious health reactions in persons with asthma, allergies, migraines, or chemical sensitivities.

Cellular phones **MUST** be turned off during classes and examinations; texting is **NOT** permitted in class.

Any student attending a test or final examination may be required to present proof of identity; photo identification is preferred.

It is the student's responsibility to retain a photocopy or computer disk copy of **ALL** assignments submitted for grading; in the event of loss or theft, a duplicate copy is required.

Students are strongly advised to read the section of the *University of Winnipeg Calendar* (found on-line at <http://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/cms-filesystem-action/pdfs/calendar/RegulationsandPolicies.pdf>) for information on Registration, Grading, Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2014** is the final date to withdraw without academic penalty from courses which begin in September 2013 and end in April 2014 (2013/14 Fall/Winter Term).

### **STUDENT PARTICIPATION POLICY**

Theatre is a communal art form in which a number of interdependent artists and crafts people co-operate to create a work of art. This fact is necessarily transferred to the learning situation, and is reflected in many of the Department's courses. Consequently, it is the Department's policy that students are required to: complete homework such as reading, line-learning, script analysis, prop lists, design drawings, etc.; attend classes; attend rehearsals both within and outside of class times; and, in short, to exhibit commitment towards the inevitably shared endeavours of our field of study.

Any student failing to fulfil these requirements is harmful to the progress of dedicated students and may, after due warning, be asked to withdraw from any individual Departmental course.

### **COURSE CONTENT NOTE**

#### **All Theatre and Film Classes**

Dramatic Literature depicts a wide variety of human action, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. The Department of Theatre and Film will not undertake to censor the subject matter of dramatic works.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of content and style in drama/film are urged to discuss these concerns with the course instructor.

#### **Performance-Related Classes**

Much of an actor's work is based upon actual experiences of life which become translated into fictional circumstances. Because of this, the teaching of acting may involve encouraging the student to examine personal and even intimate areas of life to help him or her access life experiences appropriate to the demands of the work.

Dramatic literature depicts a wide range of human actions, both elevated and base, public and private, physical and psychological, sexual and non-sexual, etc. Acting students must learn to simulate life truthfully in interaction with other students in the safety of the acting class and the rehearsal hall through exercises, discussions, and directions which address rather than avoid truthful, particularized, personalized action.

Performance classes often require strenuous physical activity. Classes may also involve physical interaction between students as part of class exercises or character development and occasional physical contact by instructors for purposes such as the demonstration of a technique or to make a posture correction. Students are responsible for wearing clothing appropriate to these activities.

Students who have concerns about dealing with the full range of actions and subject matter involved in drama are urged to discuss these concerns with their course instructor.