



## CO 365:01—Screenwriting

Fall 2005 — Mon. & Thurs., 2:30 - 3:45 p.m.

**Dr. Chad Dell**

Office hours:

E-mail:

Office: 224 Plangere Ctr., 732/263-5192 (main office: 571-3449)

Monday and Thursday, 1–2:30 p.m.; or by appointment

cdell@monmouth.edu; Web page: <http://bluehawk.monmouth.edu/~cdell/>

**Course Objectives:** Over the semester, you will learn the process of writing scripts for film and television. We will utilize a variety of concept development strategies, writing exercises, script examples and screenings, and group work in order to encourage and develop your creativity and individual writing skills. Emphasis will be placed throughout on the *process* of screenwriting, from idea formation through writing and revision. Additionally, class participation will comprise a significant aspect of the course, as we examine, critique and encourage each other's writing and imagination.

### Required Texts:

- Alan Armer. *Writing the Screenplay*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Waveland Press, 2002).
- Matt Damon & Ben Affleck, *Good Will Hunting*
- Additional readings handed out in class or available online.

### Class Policies:

1. **Attendance:** Classroom time will be balanced between discussion, screenings, script readings, writing, and group work. Your attendance and participation is essential to the success of this class. Naturally, your attendance is required, and absences will have a negative effect on your final grade as follows:
  - 3 unexcused absences: drop one letter grade
  - 5 unexcused absences: drop two letter grades
  - more than five unexcused absences: automatic failureHabitual tardiness: attending late twice will be the equivalent of 1 absence.  
Absences because of a religious holiday or athletic event are only excused when you notify me in advance. Excused absences (other than religious holidays) require written documentation. If you are late, it is up to you to remind me after class of your attendance.
2. **Special Needs:** Students with disabilities who need special accommodations for this class are encouraged to meet with me during office hours, or with the appropriate disability service provider on campus as soon as possible. Students will not be afforded any special accommodations until they disclose the disability, register with the campus disability service provider [571-3460], and complete the documentation process. Please see the student handbook for more information on the procedures.

3. **Grading:** Your final grade for the semester will be comprised of the following:

Assignments:	Value:
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Discovery Script:</b>	<b>10% total</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Premise, Character Checklist (2%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Scene-by-scene & First Draft (3%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Draft (5%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Boxing Script:</b>	<b>15% total</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Premise, Character Checklist (2%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Scene-by-scene & First Draft (3%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Draft (10 %)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Screenplay:</b>	<b>50% total</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Premise (2%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Character Checklist (3%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Scene-by-scene & Step Sheet (10%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> First 10 Pages, Next 10 Pages and complete First Draft (10%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Draft (25%)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Portfolio</b>	<b>5%</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Exercises, Short Assignments</b>	<b>10%</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Class Preparation/Participation</b>	<b>10%</b>

Grading Scale:

A 90-100 (90-91 A-/ 100 A+)	D 60-69 (60-61 D-/ 68-69 D+)
B 80-89 (80-81 B-/ 88-89 B+)	F 0-59
C 70-79 (70-71 C-/ 78-79 C+)	

Note: a portion of class will be devoted to discussing exercises or writings brought to class each day. Even if you weren't able to complete a written assignment, *please attend class anyway*. Your participation is important, impacts your grade, and will make for a richer experience for all.

4. **Late Work:** Writing to deadline is an important aspect of commercial screenwriting, and will be emphasized here as well. Graded assignments handed in late will be penalized 10% for each working day late. Exercises and other ungraded assignments are valuable largely through their in-class use; thus they will not be accepted late without a documented excused absence, such as illness.
5. **Additional Materials:**
- A)** We will be engaging in writing projects in class periodically. Please bring a formatted Floppy Disk or USB Flash Drive to class *every day*.
- B)** You will be collecting your written materials this semester into a Portfolio, which will be handed in at the end of the semester. Purchase a 3-Ring Binder, and store *clean* copies of your exercises, drafts, completed scripts, and other pertinent materials in it. (Remember: the Communication Department now expects majors to assemble a portfolio of all your major efforts—papers, articles, scripts, media projects, etc.—for presentation during Senior Seminar. Start now!)
6. **Academic Honesty:** This class follows the standards outlined in the Monmouth University Student Handbook. Penalties for plagiarism in this class include: an "F" for the assignment; an "F" for the entire semester; and/or charges brought against you under the Student Code of Conduct, which could lead to expulsion from the University. I encourage your participation in maintaining an environment of academic honesty and integrity.
7. **As a courtesy:** Before the beginning of class you are expected to turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices that might distract other students or interrupt class. Likewise, IM

or non-class-related computer activity will be frowned upon. These behaviors run counter to the creation of a productive and focused learning environment. If you cannot cooperate in this, you may be asked to leave, and will be marked absent for the day.

## 2005 Class Schedule

*This outline is subject to change; additional readings and written work will be announced. Students are responsible for changes announced in class.*

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Due:</b>
1) Th 9/8	Introduction	Read the syllabus
2) M 9/12	Where Stories Come From	Armer, Preface, Ch 1 <b>Person/Problem/Premise ex. due</b> <b>Completed "Le Menu" due</b> Bring a disk/flash drive to class
3) Th 9/15	Structure	Armer, Ch 2 <b>Mood Exercise</b>
4) M 9/19	Structure, con't Discovery Pitches	Armer, Ch 3; Script Handouts <b>Discovery Premise</b>
5) Th 9/22	Script Examination	Good Will Hunting (all)
6) M 9/26	Structure: Script Readings	Script handouts <b>Discovery Character Checklist</b> <b>&amp; Scene-by-scene</b>
7) Th 9/29	Characters at War Rewriting	Armer, Ch 4, and pp. 288-289 <b>Discovery Draft</b>
8) M 10/3	Discovery Exercise Readings (Rosh Hashanah at sundown)	<b>Discovery Final Draft</b>
9) Th 10/6	The People who Inhabit a Screenplay	Armer Ch 5
10) M 10/10	Dialog	Armer Ch 6 & 7 <b>Boxing Premise &amp; Checklist</b>
11) Th 10/13	Narrative Script Format & Style (Yom Kippur)	Armer, Ch 10 <b>Boxing scene-by-scene</b> <b>&amp; first draft</b>
12) M 10/17	Boxing Exercise Readings	<b>Boxing Final Draft</b>
13) Th 10/20	Revealing the Subtext Screenplay Project Revisited	Armer, Ch 8

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| 14) M 10/24   | Screenplay Pitches  | <b>Screenplay Pitch</b>   |
| 15) Th 10/27  | Script Commitment Day<br>Elements of Entertainment                | <b>Screenplay Premise due</b><br>Armer, Ch 9  |
| 16) M 10/31   | Exercise/Group Work   | <b>Character List</b>   |
| 17) Th 11/3   | Exercise/Script Readings  |   |
| 18) M 11/7  | Group Work  | <b>Scene-by-scene &amp;<br/>Step Sheet due</b>  |
| <p>Tues 11/8 — Last Day to withdraw with a “W”<br/>— Election Day—Vote!</p> |   |   |
| 19) Th 11/10  | Scene readings  | <b>Scenes due</b>   |
| 20) M 11/14   | Group Work -- discussing scripts                                  | <b>First 10 Pages Due</b><br>***Bring <i>two</i> copies***  |
| 21) Th 11/17  | The Professional Writer   | Armer Ch 13   |
| 22) M 11/21   | Group Work -- discussing scripts                                  | <b>Next 10 Pages Due</b><br>***Bring <i>two</i> copies***   |
| 23) Tues 11/22  | Group & Individual Work<br>(MU Follows a Thursday schedule today) |   |
| <p>Th 11/25 – Thanksgiving</p>  |   |   |
| 24) M 11/28   | Group & Individual Work   | Review Armer, 288-89<br><b>1<sup>st</sup> Draft of Full Script Due</b><br>***Bring <i>two</i> copies*** |
| 25) Th 12/1   | The Rewriting Process<br>Early Script Reading Opportunity         | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Draft Critique Due</b> (2 copies)   |
| 26) M 12/5  | Script Readings in Class  | <b>Final Draft Due</b>  |
| 27) Th 12/8   | Script Readings in Class  |   |
| 28) M 12/12   | Script Readings in Class  | <b>Portfolio Due</b>  |

Final Exam Period (t. b. a.): Script readings