

University of Georgia  
DRAM 3020  
Dramatic Writing

Spring 2006  
T-TH 11-12.15

Professor George Contini

**Phone:**

Please do not hesitate to call me with question or concerns.

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**Office Hours:**

T 12.30-1.30, Th 12.30-1.30, F 2.30-3.30

Room 111 is located on lower level of Fine Arts Building behind Room 115.

**Required Texts:**

McLaughlin, Buzz, The Playwright's Process, Backstage Books, 1997.

Students are required to bring paper and writing instruments to class.

Although it is not required, students are encouraged to bring laptops to class.

Students are required to cover all copying costs of scripts.

**Recommended Texts/ Bibliography/Computer Software/Websites**

Ball David, Backwards and Forwards, Southern Illinois University, 1983.

Brown, Rita Mae, Starting from Scratch, Bantam, 1989.

Catron, Louis, The Power of One, Heinemann, 2000.

Cameron, Julia, The Artist's Way, Tarcher/Putnam, 1992.

Campbell, Joseph. The Hero with A Thousand Faces, Princeton, 1979.

Field, Syd, Screenplay, Dell, 1994.

Goffman, Erving. Interaction Ritual, Anchor, 1967.

Goffman, Erving. The Presentation of Self in Everday Life, Doubleday, 1959.

Hatcher, Jeffrey, The Art and Craft of Playwriting, Story Press, 1996.

Longman, Stanley, From Page to Stage,

Sweet, Jeffrey, The Dramatist's Toolkit, Heineman, 1993.

Sweet, Jeffrey, Solving Your Script, Heineman, 2001.

Final Draft Software, C and M Software, 2005

The Dramatist's Guild

<http://www.dramaguild.com/>

The Dramatist's Guild of America is the professional association for playwrights, composers, and lyricists. Offers articles from Dramatists magazine, contacts, links to many theatres.

American Screenwriters Association

<http://www.asascreenwriters.com/>

Excellent site. Committed to support and advancement of screenwriters.

Theatre Communications Group

<http://www.tcg.org/>

Incredibly important and valuable resource for any one in theatre. New play script in every issue!

The Dramatic Exchange

<http://www.dramex.org/>

Put your plays online.

The Playwriting Seminars

<http://www.vcu.edu/artweb/playwriting/>

A great place to start for aspiring playwright.

The Tools of the Trade

<http://www.wga.org/tools/indes.html>

Excellent site with articles, reviews, info about pursuing screenwriting career.

### **Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

Students will be introduced to the basic tenets of dramatic structure, character development, and the elements of playwriting. Through lecture, readings, and daily writing exercises students will develop their knowledge and practical skills in dramatic writing.

Through the course of the semester students' shall conceive, develop, and complete a one act play. They shall also further their ability to critique dramatic literature and better understand the complexities of the journey both artistic and practical that a written work

takes as it goes from the artist's private imagination to the page and eventually to the public stage or screen.

### **Topical Outline/Units**

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Units: There are three units to this course which run concurrently. 1) Lecture/Readings, the professor will discuss with class the assigned readings and lecture , 2) Daily Writing Exercises, done both in class and out of class these exercises introduce students to writing techniques, 3) One Act, students will write an original one act play , taking it from conception to first public reading.

Evaluation: Students will be asked to participate fully in classroom/lab setting. It will require daily written work and will involve having writing read aloud and critiqued by professor and peers. 25% of student's grade is based on his willingness and ability to participate in class exercises and discussion/critique. All writing assignments out of class **MUST BE TYPED** and student will be responsible for bringing in necessary copies for in class reading. Writing Exercises are worth 30% of grade. Student is required to write an original one act play, at least 10 minutes in length. This will involve many steps and the completion of writing exercises exploring concept, character, structure, and format. It is worth 30% of grade. A Final exam is worth 15 %.

Attendance: Attendance is Mandatory. Due to the lab ensemble structure of this course all students must be in attendance at all times. Each unexcused absence lowers 1/2 of letter grade. **In other words, miss two classes and your grade drops from an A to a B.** Only excused medical or emergency absences will be tolerated and evidence of such must be submitted in writing from proper authorities. Assignments/Class participation that is missed for excused absences must be made up at the next class. Assignments/Class participation that is missed due to an unexcused absence will result in a zero grade and may not be made up.

**After accumulating three unexcused absences the professor will drop the student from the course.**

If you are involved in any special school functions, sporting events, religious holidays ,etc., which may require you to miss a class please inform professor asap.

Punctuality: Students who arrive late are disruptive and disrespectful to their peers who have made the effort to arrive on time. You are considered late if you arrive after the roll has been taken and completed. Two tardies equal one absence and the same rules apply as above. **In other words, if you're tardy four times you're grade drops from an A to B.**

Extra Credit: Students who do other theatre projects (not for credit) might be given extra credit. This must be arranged with professor on a case by case basis.

Grade Breakdown:

Class Participation, Attendance:	25%
Writing exercises:	30%
One Act:	30%
Final Exam:	15%

Grading Criteria:

Though grading a student's work in a writing class is the subjective right of the professor there are concrete goals that the student can strive to meet in pursuing a particular grade.

A: Excellent—Always well prepared, extensive outside preparation. Actively pursues improvement and highly self motivated. Student makes significant growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Active, positive contributor to class. Punctual, always present.

B: Very Good—Always prepared. Notable outside preparation. Pursues improvement and self motivated. Notable growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Positive contributor to class. Punctual, always present.

C: Acceptable to Good. Generally prepared. Acceptable outside preparation. Interested in improvement and often self motivated. Shows some growth in skills and knowledge during semester. Often contributes to class. Sometimes late, some absences.

D: (Failing for Majors) Mostly Unacceptable. Often not prepared. Shows little outside preparation. Shows little interest in improvement and is rarely self motivated. Very little skill and knowledge growth during semester. Seldom contributes to class and has negative attitude. Habitually Late, absences.

F: Unacceptable. Rarely prepared. Lacks outside preparation. Virtually no interest in improvement and not motivated. Virtually no growth in skills and knowledge. Does not contribute to class, negative attitude. Not punctual, several absences.

Miscellaneous:

**All written work must be TYPED or it will not be accepted.**

Dramatic Writing sometimes contains strong language or situations that some might consider offensive. Please see me privately ASAP if this presents a problem.

If you have a disability or physical injury that hinders you from participating in class activities please see me privately ASAP.

The following is a basic outline of each week's focus and class activities.  
Subject to reasonable changes with one week's notice from instructor.

PP= Playwright's Process

Week 1

Jan 10 I Intros. Syllabus. Profiles.  
Jan 12 Six Elements of Aristotle. Writing Exercises. Credo.

Week 2

Jan 17 Read Intro and Chap 1, 2 PP The Dramatic Premise /Lists  
Jan 19 Writing Exercises.

Week 3

Jan 24 Read Chap 3,4 PP The Idea  
Jan 26 Writing exercises.

Week 4

Jan 31 Read Chap 5,6 PP Character/Backstory  
Feb 2 Writing Exercises.

Week 5

Feb 7 Read Chap 7 PP Structure/Conflict/Hero's Journey  
Feb 9 Writing Exercises.

Week 6

Feb 14 Read Chap 8 PP Format  
Feb 16 Writing Exercises.

Week 7:

Feb 21 Read Chap 9 PP Bringing it to Life/ Goffman  
Feb 23 Writing Exercises

Week 8:

Feb 28 Writing Exercises.  
Mar 2 Writing Exercises.

Week 9:

Mar 7 Read Chap 10 First Draft  
Mar 9 Writing Exercises.

Week 10:

Mar 14 Spring Break. Just write it.  
Mar 16 Spring Break Just write it.

Week 11:

Mar 21 First One Act Readings/Critique.  
Mar 23 First One Act Readings/Critique

Week 12

Mar 28 First Readings continued.

Mar 30 First Readings continued.

Week 13:

Apr 4 Read Chap 11 Rewrites. Strategies and Techniques for refining script.

Apr 6 Rewrites. Using Actors in playmaking.

Week 14:

Apr 11 Read Chap 12 Ongoing Process. Rewrites.

Apr 13 Rewrites.

Week 15:

Apr 18 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Apr 20 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Week 16:

Student will have choice of having public reading of piece one evening this week or reading it in class.

Apr 25 Public Reading

Apr 27 Public Reading

Final Exam:

Tuesday May 9, 12-3 pm

### **University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy**

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty”. Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

Students are expected to adhere to the University Honor Code and Honesty Policy. UGA Student Honor Code: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” *A Culture of Honesty*, the University’s policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at [www.uga.edu/ovpi](http://www.uga.edu/ovpi).

Dramatic Writing  
Grade Sheet:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Class Participation/Attendance (250 points)

Writing Exercises (300 points)

One Act (300 points)

Final Exam (150 points)

Total (1000 points)

Grade

A 900 to 1000

B 800 to 900

C 700 to 800

D 600 to 700

F 0 to 600

