

## **COURSE SYLLABUS - COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT**

**January 19 – May 10**

### **I. COURSE INFORMATION**

SEMESTER: Spring      YEAR: 2016

COURSE NAME: Thea 3320-001 – Playwriting I

CRN: 28324

CLASSROOM: Education Building 318 – Tues. and Thurs. 3:00 PM to 4:20 PM

TEXT: Not required

### **II. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

NAME: Harry W. Martin (Marty Martin)

OFFICE LOCATION: In classroom unless otherwise specified

OFFICE HOURS: Before class from 2:00 – 3:00 PM or after class from 4:30 - 5:30 PM and by appointment.

PHONE: 755-2830

CELL PHONE: Text only 799-6278 (include your full name)

EMAIL: [hmartin@elp.rr.com](mailto:hmartin@elp.rr.com)

### **III. COURSE CONTENT**

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION: Students will be introduced to the tools and discipline necessary to write tightly structured, dramatic scenes in order to tell stories through dramatic action, characterization, and dialogue. Each student will also write a short or full-length play. Emulation of the broadest possible spectrum of dramatic film styles and approaches is encouraged.

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students will learn the fundamentals of professional play structure and formatting, story and plot development, character development, dialogue, conflict, style, narrative, theater vocabulary, and technique required for the writing of plays.

C. LEARNING OUTCOMES: Students will demonstrate expertise in skillful communication and self-expression, giving constructive feedback to peers, contextualize their own choices within dramatic literary history

and theory, and manifest a personal approach to the techniques of dramatic writing.

- D. METHOD OF INSTRUCTION: lectures, group projects, group discussion, oral presentations.
- E. ASSIGNED READINGS: Various plays as provided by the Instructor.
- E. ASSIGNMENTS: Students will write 1 short or full-length play of 15-20 minute duration (approximately 10-20 pages) or 90-120 minute duration (approximately 80-100 pages) which will constitute 75% of their grades according to the following scale:

Concept/Story - 25% / Character/Conflict - 25% / Formatting - 25%

Attendance and class participation will constitute the remaining 25% of the students' grades.

Students will bring a dedicated notebook and pen to every class.

Students will give readings from their scripts and provide oral/written critiques.

G. GRADING SCALE:

- 1. 90 - 100 A
- 2. 80 - 89 B
- 3. 70 - 79 C
- 4. 60 - 69 D
- 5. 0 - 59 F

IV. RULES, CLASSROOM POLICIES/ ETC.

ATTENDANCE: recorded each day however students will not be dropped from the class because of absences. It will be the responsibility of the students to drop the class themselves if they do not intend to complete the course. **Any unexcused absence will reduce the student's grade by 5%.**

LATE WORK: will receive a grade of zero unless arrangements have been made with the Instructor prior to the assignment's due date.

Stay in touch with your Instructor.

All cell phones will be turned off prior to commencement of class. No exceptions. Any student using a cell phone during class for any reason will be asked to leave for the remainder of the day and counted absent.

Students may not wear hats, sunglasses, mouth or tongue piercings, or chew gum during oral presentations.

Students will not have earphones in their ears during class and laptops can only be used in class with permission from the Instructor.

All students are required to attend class on the day and time of the institution's scheduled final.

## **V. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

The University of Texas El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.

## **VI. CASS POLICY**

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu). Or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). CASS' Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

## **VII. COURSE CALENDAR**

**Jan 19, 21** Orientation, Introduction, history, and script formatting. Watch short play.  
Assignment: Written analysis and review

**Jan 26, 28** What is Structure  
Action  
Exercise 1 action scene

**Feb 2, 4** Motivation and subtext  
Conflict  
Exercise 2 conflict scene

**Feb 9, 11** High stakes and high hopes  
Event  
Exercise 3 event scene

**Feb 16, 18** Beats, scenes, acts  
Exercise 4 beat scene

**Feb 23, 25** Dramatic elements  
Exercise 5 choose a play and identify tools that make it a drama

**Mar 1, 3** The impulse  
Exercise 6 writing from an image

**Mar 8, 10** Spring Break

**Mar 15, 17** Character  
Exercise 7 create a scene for an active and passive character

**Mar 22, 25** Journey of the play  
Exercise 8 examine how characters change over the course of the plot of a chosen play

**Mar 29, 31** Rewriting  
Exercise 9 make a list of 5 variations on choices in a scene you've written and how they might change, improve or flaw the scene

**Apr 5,7** Exposition  
Exercise 10 list and analyze all the exposition on the sample page of a chosen play

**Apr 12, 14** When you're stuck and all else fails

**Apr 19, 21** Reading from scenes and discussion

**Apr 26, 28** Reading from scenes and discussion

**May 3, 5** Reading from scenes and discussion

**May 10, 12** Reading from scenes and discussion  
Final Class – Completion deadline

**YOU MUST BE PRESENT.**

**THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MAKE  
NECESSARY CHANGES IN THE SCHEDULE/CALENDAR/  
ASSIGNMENTS, DEPENDING ON THE NEEDS OF THE CLASS.**