Designed for playwrights with some experience as well as those who have completed Introduction to Playwriting, this class takes scene writing, character development, and dramatic dialogue to the next level. Participants will develop the first half or the first act of a full-length play with their work being discussed in a supportive and challenging environment. Weekly reading assignments from interviews with working playwrights will lead to further discussion and weekly assignments involving the participant’s scripts will also be handed out.

Required books:


Week-by-week assignments:

**January 14** – In preparation for the first class, please read and be prepared to discuss the prologue with Edward Albee and the interview with Arthur Kopit from Sweet’s book.

Be prepared to share seven to ten pages from the first half of a play-in progress.

Assignment #1 for the following week: Be prepared to answer three questions regarding your play – Where am I? Who am I with? Why should I care?

**January 21** – Discuss interview with Jules Feiffer, answer questions from previous week, and share work.

Assignment #2: What is the point of attack of your play? What is the event or the inciting incident that causes it to start? Why is this play happening now? What is different about this night from every other night?

**January 28** – Discuss interview with A.R. Gurney, answer questions from previous week, and share work.
Assignment #3: Who is your central character? What do they want and how badly do they want it? What is keeping them from getting what they want? What do the rest of your characters want and how are they in conflict with each other and your central character? What would be interesting about your central character if the plot hadn’t happened to them?

February 4 – Discuss interview with David Hare, answer questions from previous week, and share work.

Assignment #4: How is time used in your play? Is the action continuous or non-continuous, linear or non-linear? If non-continuous, and perhaps non-linear, what clues are you providing in the text to indicate the shifts in time?

February 11 – Discuss interview with Christopher Durang, answer questions from previous week, and share work.

Assignment #5: What is the setting for your play? Is it a single set or a unit set? If a unit set with multiple settings, how do we get from here to there?

February 18 – Discuss interview with Marsha Norman, answer questions from previous week, and share work.

Assignment #6: How is language used in your play or how does it differ from character to character? How is text used? How is subtext used? Beyond dialogue, what activities are you providing for your characters? In other words, what are they doing? What actions are they enacting?

February 25 – Discuss interview with Nicholas Wright, answer questions from previous week, and share work.

Assignment #7: Does each scene end in such a way that we anxiously await the start of the next scene? If you are writing a play in two acts, are you ending your first act with a question that will be answered in the second act?

March 4 - Discuss interview with Donald Margulies, answer questions from previous week, and share work.

This syllabus is subject to change.